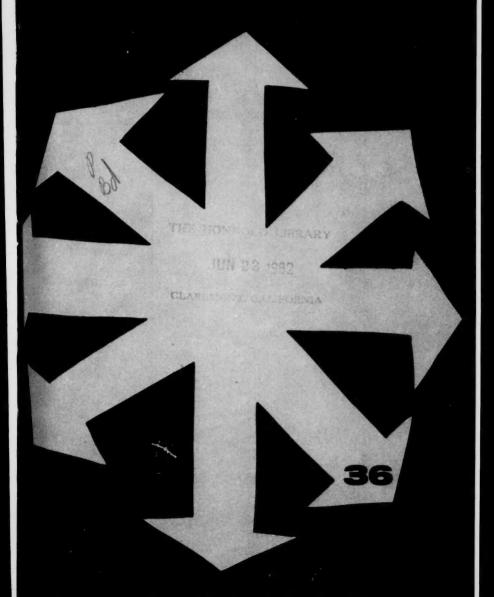
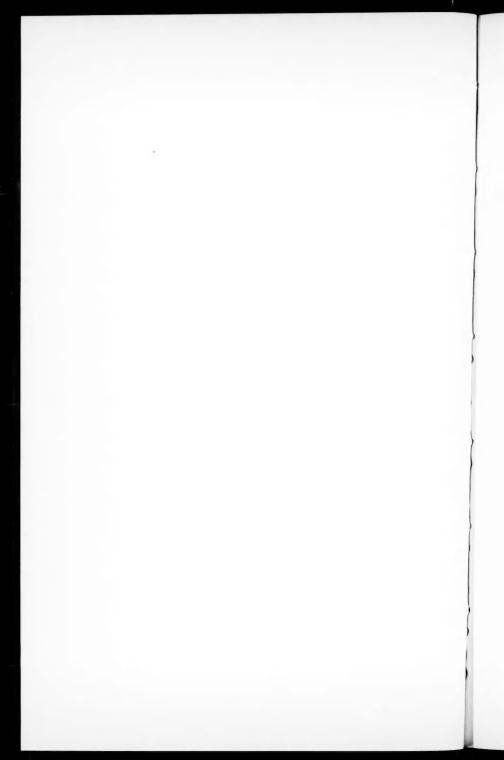
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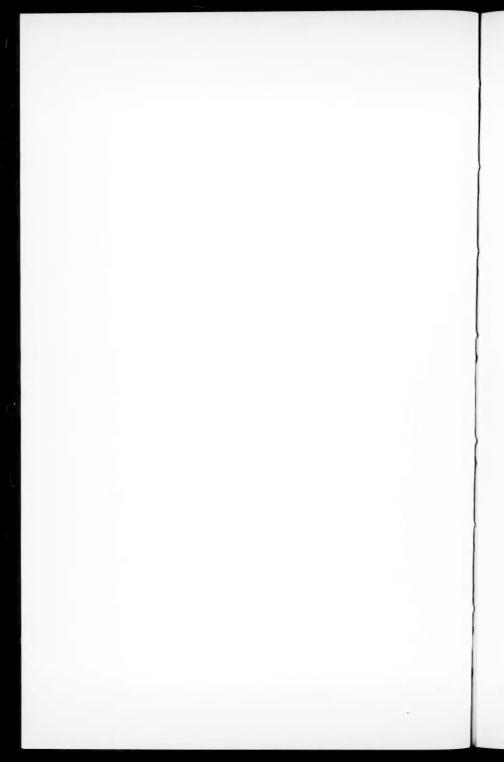
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CONTEMPORARY ADOLESCENCE

This essay is intended to deepen our understanding of the fundamental causes of the characteristic features of contemporary adolescence, and of their significance. Since the reader will not be unfamiliar with the phenomena, his personal experience may be relied on to supplement a description which would otherwise be too concise. The description is based on data, research and summary accounts drawn from the literature of various countries, which is suggestive because of its uniformity. It suggests five conclusions which bring into focus the general condition and position of contemporary adolescence:

1. While the development of the adolescent used to take place during the few years traditionally called "adolescence" (ages 15 to 18), it has steadily expanded during the last century, and recently with an ever-increasing speed. Nowadays, it reaches up to age 25, and in many cases and in many areas beyond this, and includes in the opposite direction the majority of the 13-to-14-year-olds without, however, having ceased to exert its

attraction on what was traditionally called "childhood." An enormous extension of adolescence has thus taken place, and this is already reflected to a large extent in the development of legal notions. Modern man spends a considerable portion of his life as an adolescent.¹

2. Instability, impulsiveness and insecurity have traditionally been counted as criteria of adolescence. But where they formerly remained mere flaws in a more comprehensive and more stable behavioral structure, they now govern adolescent behavior. This does not follow from the frequent news of juvenile crime, vandalism, drug-addiction or rioting. It is true that these have a high symptomatic value, when compared with the manifestations typical of adolescents of former times. But they lack any representative significance, and in any case, the turn to the extreme of the manifestations must not be allowed to draw our attention away from the general turn to the extreme of the adolescent phase. Fluidity and formlessness have become criteria of normal juvenile behavior. This is clearly shown by the current forms of music, dance, language and social intercourse. This loss of form is accompanied by a quest for experience which comes out just as clearly in the means and the content of conversation. leisure and social intercourse. Here, too, there is an unmistakable turn to the extreme. The thirst for stirring experiences, which had gripped part of European youth already around the turn of the century, has turned into the dream of passing one's life in a mere succession of experiences. Any seriousness and concentration which one meets on occasion, prove to be a beginning or an exception, and frequently, a practical compromise with the circumstances which has by no means ceased to be subservient to that orientation towards experience. The foreground is taken up by greater vital needs. The individual and social development of the person, which is the proper task of the adolescent phase, encounters difficulties and delays, especially in the emotional and moral spheres, and frequently succeeds only with qualifications or not at all. the second contract of the second second second

On the other hand, the ratio of adolescents in contemporary society is relatively minor, because of the low birth-rate and the high life-expectancy.

- 3. When a society includes a group which differs both actually and consciously from the others, a sociologist may speak of a "subculture." Such a group must be independent on either economic, religious, political or other grounds, and must either actively strive for its independence as a distinction, or passively accept it as an alienation forced upon it. Again, such a group is not to be separated from the society of which it forms a part, even though it retains a large measure of self-sufficiency and self-control in relation to the society as a whole. An individual identifies himself with the latter only indirectly and conditionally, namely via his own group, and it is to this that he is primarily obligated. This is also why members of such a group feel at home where their social organization prescribes an exchange with the rest of society. Contemporary adolescents have, in this sense, their own subculture. The forms and norms of their lives have reached a degree of uniqueness and autonomy which they lacked formerly even where revolt against the adult world was adopted as a conscious program. The decisive reason is not that the dividing lines have become more numerous and more sharply drawn, but that adolescents nowadays are less oriented towards the adult world. Far from being forced to conceal their way of life, or at least to measure it in terms of the values of society as a whole and, if need be, justify it before them, they make free use of the resources of the whole culture for their own purposes. In view of this independence, it is not surprising that the adolescent subculture should be almost sovereign over all areas of life. Adolescents have not only their own unmistakable forms of conduct, sport, amusement, but also their own fashions, morals, literature and language.
- 4. It may also be observed that adult culture is becoming puerile. This is not even a very novel phenomenon, and J. Huizinga, in the 1930's, was not the first one to deplore it. In the meantime, the prestige that attaches to everything juvenile has risen enormously. Adult conduct, amusement, reading, leisure, morals, language and manners show increasingly juvenile traits. Here, too, the preference for picture, sound and rhythm, and the reign of both monotony and diversion, announce the promotion of a discontinuous succession of experiences to a phi-

losophy of life and happiness, and the demotion of continuous personal accomplishments. In the world of business, the ways and means of temptation are aimed almost invariably at typically juvenile wishes, symbols and realities. The psychology of everyday and professional life looks with ever-increasing steadiness to the model of the juvenile needs of security and adaptation. At the same time, leisure and sport, election campaigns and political propaganda, the methods of teaching and other basic orientations towards life, self, and world show increasingly a puerile playfulness. In the arts, children's pictures and works of adolescent authors put forth claims to serious consideration, and the choice of subjects and manner of execution betray an affinity with the juvenile world. The absence of older people from literature corresponds to their exclusion from society into homes for the aged or onto old-age pensions. The adult no longer finds his bearings in his own age group, and already lacks the feeling that there are specific tasks for his phase of life. His normal efforts are directed to understanding youth, keeping up with it and adapting to it. Since age differences are levelled, authority inside the family and outside of it is only felt to be authoritarian, and replaced by companionship or community of interests. Ideals of conduct that are differentiated according to age, come to be displaced by a uniform ideal which shows clearly juvenile traits. Contemporary adolescents have not only their own subculture, but in some respects the dominant subculture.

5. What has been said will gain in theoretical profile if we observe that contemporary adolescents are markedly similar in all industrially developed countries. This is not just true of the extreme phenomena, as witnessed by the similarities between the French blousons noirs, the American juvenile delinquents, the Italian teddy-boys, the Australian bodgies, the Taiwanese tai-paos, the South-African duck-tails, and the Polish and Russian booligans; it is true even of normal behavior. The youth of all industrialized countries tends to converge. The reason is not to be sought in the identity of culture, made possible by the interweaving through export of both material and immaterial products. This explains at most why the same hit record, the same singer, the same new fashion, the same dime novel and

the same amusement should arouse the same enthusiasm in Rome, London, New York, Warsaw, Stockholm, Tokyo, Johannesburg and Cairo. We can only understand this almost unlimited import of cultural products if we assume an identity of underlying attitudes. The identity of the conditions of life in an industrial society generates forces which increasingly eliminate national and other differences. The same type of adolescent is

being formed everywhere.

This should be sufficient justification for raising the problem stated at the beginning. We are concerned not with a specific country, but with industrial society. There remain, of course, important differences. These are partly explained by differences in the degree or form of industrialization, whether of the material or of the ideological kind; partly by historical circumstances, and partly by national peculiarities. Looked at in this way, the industrial society and contemporary adolescence do not exist anywhere in a pure form. But we are concerned with what is known in the social sciences as an "ideal type." The conditions in industrially developed countries approximate to this ideal type. This is also why contemporary adolescence is not an ephemeral phenomenon, which could be explained by the threat of global war, the influence of American culture or other historical circumstances, but brings into view an essential trait of contemporary society. The question about the causes and the significance requires first a brief account of a few fundamental sociological concepts and a few historical facts.

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

By "adolescence" is meant in everyday speech a certain age, characterized by biological and psychological properties, and consequently, all persons of that age. Among these properties, those connected with puberty are so much in the foreground that all other properties which are counted as typically adolescent are regarded as mere accompanying phenomena and in any case as a natural expression of the individual's biological age.

Sociologists have shown this to be at least partially correct, by showing the so-called "ages of man" to be primarily social classifications: Different cultures and times adopt different principles of division. Each society makes use of a classification into age groups which appears "natural" to it and assigns to each age group a certain conduct and certain ideals and properties, or in sociological language, attributes a "role" to it. There are age roles, as there are, say, professional roles, family roles and social roles. Normally, a role expresses not only what the environment expects of the bearer of the role, but also what he expects of himself. Even though, subjectively, the experience of conflict may predominate in the individual's experience, objectively, society rests precisely on the fact that, translated into simple and rational terms, everyone does after all will what he shall. Sociologists usually refer to this fact when they observe that roles are normally internalized.

This is not to belittle the importance of presocial facts. The physical immaturity of the child, the puberty of the adolescent and the debility of the aged are constants which a social classification into age groups cannot overlook. Just as little can the natural order of psychological development be reversed by social flat. An adolescent cannot be assigned attributes which presuppose personal experience. But even though biological facts and the irreversibility of the experience of the world impose limits on the division into social types, they constitute no more than general tendencies which can be realized in a variety of concrete phenomena and can, moreover, be fitted into different contexts of sense and function. Thus the use made by a society of these tendencies in laying down the age roles, constitutes the cultural achievement proper.

But social facts themselves impose limits on the variability of age groups. Every society must continually bequeath its cultural heritage to future generations. Thus the early phases of life serve everywhere to accustom the child to culture and society. This process, known as "socialization," is extremely

² This is the basis of the dream of the golden age, whose classical formulation is Ovid's vindice nullo, sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque colebat. As to the question whether the element of constraint is less pronounced in less complex societies, which anthropologists have been debating in a sceptical frame of mind, it should be noted that it is not the constraint itself, but the manner in which it is felt, which counts.

subtle, complicated and fundamental. For it is not just a matter of knowledge, abilities and ways of acting, but of norms, ideas, values, feelings and aspirations, as expected of the child in different spheres of life and in his intercourse with bearers of different roles. What the child learns must, moreover, be internalized and become habitual. He must not so much identify himself with it, as be identified with it. It is therefore with his birth that the formation of his behavior begins, through encouragement or discouragement of his reactions. An inner structure is thus gradually raised, which we call "person." For the new-born is not, but becomes, a person. And a person is not the result of an automatic process of maturation, but of lengthy and complicated social learning. Even the material substrate of this process is extremely complicated, consisting as it were of the realization, spread over many years, of a neurological program, that of the laying, bundling and switching of nerve fibers in thousands of ways, so that the feelings, ideas, motor abilities and aspirations will be differentiated, combined, frustrated and integrated, taking into account the natural and social environment. Only thus can the undirected, formless and disconnected actions and reactions of the infant be converted into the structure of a person. And since a person is a product of social learning, every man acquires the type of personality peculiar to his culture, which is not only in content but even in structure a peculiar combination of feelings, aspirations and ideas.

Thus age roles are elements of a system. This is why they can only be properly understood in the context of the entire classification into age groups. For every age role presupposes an understanding of the remaining and complementary age roles within that classification. And since everyone must run through all age groups, each earlier age role must prepare him for the later ones, so as to assure an unhindered transition from the earlier to the later. This systematic connection obviously sets a limit to the proper development of each single age role.

It is also very important to keep in mind a circumstance

³ This notion is not to be confused with the more concrete, but also more dubious, notion of a national character, which is attuned to constitutive elements rather than to structural constitution.

Contemporary Adolescence

that is often neglected, namely, that children and adolescents are potential deviants to the extent that their socialization is not yet completed. Their impulses and expectations are not fully integrated either with one another or in relation to the culture. Thus, children and adolescents are open to anything new, as witnessed by their fondness for innovations, their part in revolutions, and their readiness in cases of contact with a foreign culture. They contain, by nature, the potential of a society for mutation. Successful socialization thus demands constant in-

fluence, and thus, certain forms of dependence.4

Finally, the nature of socialization lays down an ideal tendency for the earlier phases. The innocence of the child rests partly on his exclusion from the adult world, and partly on the weight that must be placed early in his life on ideal requirements. This trait becomes even more pronounced in the adolescent, because he must now learn, no longer only the ideal requirements for individual action, but the ideal self-knowledge of his culture. Social learning, too, develops in a natural order. The particular precedes the general. It is only in the later phase of socialization that the entire culture justifies its existence by implanting in the adolescent its fundamental principles and its ideals; and it does this in a compact way, in the form, as it were (and as is done quite literally in certain cultures untutored in the art of writing), of a summing up prior to the declaration of social maturity. This normal tendency can in certain circumstances appear in the guise of idealism, which has so frequently been observed in adolescents, and which is largely the reflection of the expectations heaped by society on the adolescent in the course of his socialization.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Every society has always made some provisions for the special conditions of youth, insofar as this was necessary and possible. And an adolescent role with some special rights and duties

⁴ Nothing can in general be said about the nature of this dependence, for the mode of dependency may be authoritarian as well as democratic.

constitutes no exception. In most cases, this role is simply a modification of the adult role, and the conception of a separate age group, independent of the adult, and with its own essential tasks and characteristics, is completely missing. A child is normally admitted to the adult group when he attains sexual maturity, and may encounter finer but internal differences within that group. Adolescence is thus really a novel phenomenon.⁵

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There is a view common among laymen, but also frequently accepted by sociologists and sometimes even built by them into a system, which incidentally was a commonplace even among the philosophers of the eighteenth century. According to this view, adolescence is to be looked upon as the result of a delayed assumption of adult roles. It is true that whereas formerly a child was usually able to absorb the culture of his society by the time he had reached complete physical maturity, and was then ready for his adult role, the division of labor began as early as the beginning of the modern era to delay the process of socialization beyond sexual maturity. It is thus an analytical truism that adolescence does not appear without a delay in socialization. But by no means does it follow from this that

In addition, this essay is based implicitly on the following systematic presuppositions: Adolescence as a social phenomenon appears wherever the structural growth of society exceeds considerably the confines of the family and of the group related by blood or marriage, and calls thus for special institutions of socialization, which make inevitable the formation of homogeneous age groups. This is to be distinguished from the case in which special historical reasons lead to the assignment of definite functions to the adolescent group. Here, the division into groups does not follow necessarily from the structural complexity of society. This case is illustrated by warrior states like Sparta and by certain African tribes. A third form of adolescence is to be found where the internal structure of the family blocks the way to the succession of the generations. Since the division into groups is not inevitable in this case, this is not a proper form. Mixed forms are, of course, perfectly normal.

This essay deals only with the first form, of which contemporary adolescence is a clear case. The origin of this adolescence is, incidentally, sketched here against the background of European history. This is justified by the fact that contemporary adolescence is the result of an incessant structural growth of society, and that this growth is shown in its most consequential and paradigmatic form in the rise of the industrial society, with its division of labor, in Europe.

⁵ Compare this, as well as the general introduction, with H. Plessner, "Het Probleem der Generaties," in Groenman, Heere and Vercruijsse (eds.), Het Sociale Leven in al zijn Facetten, part I, Assen, 1958.

the behavior and condition of adolescents is to be explained as a consequence of this delay, and thus of the divergence between physical and social maturity. The weakness of this theory is shown by the fact that it is a generalization from the individual adolescent whose "natural" desire for a family and gainful employment finds no quick satisfaction. The underlying psychology of wish-fulfilment reveals the ideological imprisonment of the theory. The sociologically decisive fact that adolescence is a social group, or rather exists in the form of many and various overlapping groups, is sacrificed in the attempt to derive the phenomena to be explained from conscious desires, found in the individual adolescent.⁶

Such groups arising from situations common to many individuals, are of course sociologically far from irrelevant. The discovery of childhood, which preceded historically the crystallization of adolescence and was closely connected with it, provides an instructive example of age patterning from identical situations. Indeed, childhood has by no means always or everywhere been regarded as a separate phase of life with its own moral and emotional values. It may seem that observation of the obvious distinguishing features of the child must lead to the current positive view of childhood. How little it must, is shown by the European middle ages which lacked any feeling for a separate world of childhood. A child was conceived of as an adult whose immaturity still kept him from acting in an adult manner. This is even shown in paintings where a child is represented as an adult in miniature. The aim of education was an early imitation of adult behavior, and children shared without restriction the adult world of work and amusement. It was only in the beginning of the modern era that a child was granted special tasks, feelings, abilities and dreams, and thus isolated, either wholly or in part, from the adult world. This positive conception of childhood is essentially the result of social forces.

The urban family of the late Middle Ages was becoming

⁶ The thesis of delayed socialization has many adherents in America. This is partly explained by the myth of early economic independence, which was created in America's agricultural past where it could come true under conditions of unlimited supply of virgin land, and carried over successfully to the industrial present where it was even strengthened.

relatively small, having left the larger group related by blood or marriage to which the rural family still belonged. The marriage roles were now no longer overwhelmingly defined from the outside, by the continuous expectations of the community in which the partners lived or worked, but had to be stabilized from the inside, by the personal relations between the partners. This is expressed historically in the emphasis of the middle-class family on feelings. More important, the children were relieved of the burden of concrete realities. In an agrarian society, a child has an immediate value as a bread-winner, which he loses under urban conditions. Instead of being claimed primarily by things, he is claimed by persons. The importance of this fact should not be underestimated, especially not since the child becomes at the same time free for a continuous and exclusive contact with his parent, which makes it possible to establish dominant personal and emotional ties. Only in such a relationship does the child find room to develop his own nature. What we call "child" nowadays is thus the result of an identical situation and its effect upon the consciousness and personality of individuals.

This change remained, however, confined because the unburdening of the child had to give way in the later years of his childhood to the customary apprenticeship, which threw him back into the realities of adult life. The further extension of childhood must therefore be traced back to a different circumstance, and this was the division of children into homogeneous groups when they entered school. Schools divided according to age had been unknown to the middle ages. This is also one of the roots of adolescence. But the problem shifts here onto different ground, because it is no longer a matter of identical

effects upon individuals, but of groups.

As long as the child remains exclusively within the family group, there is no room for adolescence in the proper sense of the word to arise. Only when the social structure makes it possible for young people to form direct ties among themselves, can they develop by themselves a common awareness, and among themselves firmly-rooted common properties. Such relationships become necessary wherever the structure of society considerably

⁷ Cf. Philippe Ariès, L'Enfant et la vie familiale, Paris, 1960.

exceeds family and blood relationships, so that the process of socialization can no longer be completed within the family. This is the case in labor-dividing societies. The division of labor was already sufficiently pronounced during the middle ages to necessitate a few institutionalized contacts among young people, e.g. among students and apprentices, which promptly led to the appearance of some adolescent phenomena. But these remained confined in extent as well as kind, partly because such groups were built immediately into associations of different ages, as apprentices were built into the household and the family of the master, and partly because their members remained of fairly different ages, as was the case with students. Only the school which was divided into homogeneous age groups began at the beginning of the modern era to bring young people of the same age and in sufficient numbers together in continuous and institutionalized contact. This further relief from the claims of the adult world enabled the young to show in their relations with contemporaries tendencies specific to their age, and to cast these tendencies into fixed forms. Such tendencies could not develop earlier, when young people were associated with others of different ages, and when they could not even become aware of the possibility of such tendencies. This gain in social freedom was all the greater because adults now learned to see children and adolescents divided into age groups. This led educators to devise special teaching methods and distribute the material according to age, while adults in general were led to recognize adolescence as a separate phase and specific state. Finally, adolescents had to develop norms and customs to regulate their own relationships. Thus adolescence was created, beyond its earlier beginnings, as a number of small groups with their own awareness, their own views, attitudes, norms and expectations. And adolescents were recognized as a separate group, when certain tasks and characteristics specific to their age were attributed to them by the adults.

This is, nevertheless, only one of the origins of adolescence. In a way, it produced only the negative form of adolescence: The contact between adolescents, institutionalized by society for certain purposes, created a group life with its own nature and specific manners only as an accidental by-product. Insofar and

as long as adolescents as a group were separated from the adults, their group life served only their own purposes and had no function for society as a whole. Since this group life went beyond the purposes of mental, moral and practical education, for which adolescent contacts had been institutionalized, and beyond the recognition of a limited independence implicit in this institutionalization, it was regarded by the adults as improper and concealed from them by the adolescents. But this first form of adolescence came to be covered up and thus even transformed by further social changes. The product of these changes could be called the positive form of adolescence, because adolescent activity and society entered now into a positive union. Historically, this is reflected in the fact that "adolescence" became a topic

only in the second half of the eighteenth century.

This other origin of youth is to be found in a change in socialization. In a labor-dividing society, a young man must prepare himself not only for his occupation, but also for a social environment unknown to him at least in its concrete and specific details. Where he could formerly grow into his father's occupation without having to give up his childish or adolescent group life, he must now anticipate in his imagination the group life of his future occupational and personal groups. These differ from any of his previous groups not only in their personal and occupational requirements; they are also distinguished by their professional ethics, class norms, regional peculiarities, religion, social insight, forms of prestige, and morals. To see in the development of formal education nothing but the components of occupational training would be to take a much too narrow view of it. It is suggestive that with the increasing industrialization, the weight of European education began around 1800 to shift to the formation of an "all-round person," whereas the eighteenth century had still been content with practical preparation. This is by no means a romantic paradox of the history of ideas, which could be removed by the convenient formula of "cultural lag," but a necessary social consequence. The growing mobility and heterogeneity of society had rendered the older form of socialization obsolete which had been accomplished by family, community and trade school. In a society whose structures had grown far beyond family and community, socialization was indeed a difficult task. How difficult, can be seen alone from the flood of writings on social ethics, which had been needed even in previous centuries with their still limited mobility, to help bridge the gap between formation by family and community on the one hand, and life in a larger society on the other, whether at court or in other circles.

Two general requirements arise, functionally speaking, under these conditions. First, an ideal self-image is needed which would permit socialization to take place above regional differences and independent of the class structure. Such an image must be general in nature, and thus lie as it were on a more abstract level of integration. As long as the adolescent and the adult phases run off in essentially the same social group, socialization is tailored to recurrent situations, foreseeable in concrete detail, and finds therefore sufficient justification in custom and tradition. But where the future occupations, social positions and places of residence of the young are as different as they are unknown, socialization must aim at general situations. The natural consequence, illustrated in detail by European history, is the replacement of fixed traditions of behavior. See the proposal principles and ideals of behavior.

In the second place, such an image must be effectively internalized. Lacking the power of conviction that belongs to a concrete paradigm handed down habitually and directly, it is predominantly ideal and abstract in character. Since it can only be experienced in the imagination, it needs to be internalized

⁸ D. Riesman, in *The Lonely Crowd*, Yale University Press, 1950, has grasped this, but only on the descriptive level. It has not been sufficiently observed to what extent the intellectual movements of the modern era, and especially of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were rooted in the disturbances entailed by the structural growth of society beyond traditional forms of life. The need for a new way of stabilizing life by means of an ideal paradigm, dictated by the functional demands of the social conditions, can be shown by biographical as well as textual evidence to be behind a great many of those intellectual achievements. It is plain that the need for intellectual stabilization must have been especially urgent in Germany, where lack of national and cultural unity did not even allow of such national standardization of behavior as was to be found in England or France. Here is the social clue to an understanding of many facets of German intellectual history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and among others, of such unmistakable phenomena as the *Bildungsroman* and the fondness for historical paradigms.

more deeply. This is all the more necessary as mobility and heterogeneity now also make the social control of behavioral conformity more difficult. A deep internalization of an ideal can only be achieved by means of imaginative penetration and identification. This presupposes that the adolescent be unburdened of the immediate realities of adult life; for their claims would make the process of internalization psychologically impossible, and their demands conflict by their content with any ideal paradigm because they always call for pratical attitudes and for compromises. Such unburdening must include a partial freeing of the adolescent, not from general values, but from concrete formation by parents and other agents of socialization. The adolescent must not cling to their particular patterns, but must become free for a general self-image and thus for life in a larger society.

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Only at this point does the social function of the new phase of life become visible. What physiological and psychological tendencies impart to adolescents, what institutional separation into homogeneous age groups lends to them of common and specific properties, what discipline and education according to age add to this, and what delayed assumption of adult roles may contribute; all this does not yet amount to what we are accustomed to calling "adolescence" in the proper sense of the word. Only the new form of socialization that has been hinted at effects the change, comparable to the discovery of childhood, whereby adolescence comes to be recognized as a phase of life with its own tasks. Adolescence is then no longer merely the result of a delayed assumption of adult roles, which is demanded by the economic organization of society in the interest of occupational training, and which produces as an undesired by-product novel forms of social intercourse within the homogeneous age

⁹ For reasons of space, the positive form of youth has only been developed here from the point of view of its function. This method, which is of course historically inadmissible, may be excused because we are still only concerned to prepare the argument. In this connection, a word about S. N. Eisenstadt's brilliant book, From Generation to Generation: Age Groups and Social Structure, London, 1956, might not be out of place. This publication, which is indispensable for a serious treatment of the problem, suffers from the central weakness of unmitigated functionalism: It thinks it can derive social and historical facts from social requirements.

groups. To this delay is added a comprehensive positive task. And a new type of adolescent comes into existence.

The decisive factor is the relief from concrete everyday exigencies. The adolescent must adopt an ideal in such a way that he can make decisions of his own in unforeseeable contingencies and in any social group, and still conform to the social norms. Since he must in the long run live in a sense on his own, he must be shaped more thoroughly. And this requires a longer preparation by means of isolation, partly real and partly imaginative, from the adult world. His unburdening, effected by separation in the schools, acquires thus a higher function. But if the example of his father or other patterns of behavior taken from his own age group are replaced by a general internalized ideal when his socialization is completed, his view of life will change in perspective. Where the individual could formerly concern himself only with the question whether an individual action was right or proper, he comes now to be confronted with the problem of how to unify the conduct of his life while keeping it close to the ideal. The responsibility for building a unified life out of a sum of individual actions falls now to the individual. Life begins to be viewed as a whole and, in this perspective, to be endowed with an identity. It is precisely this imaginative anticipation of life as a whole which forms part of the traditional concept of adolescence. Thus adolescence assumes, in the self-knowledge of the adolescent, the character of a separate phase of life, whose task is to prepare him internally for adulthood. The problem of the generations does not properly appear till this view of life (though not necessarily its translation into fact) becomes habitual with the adolescent. Where it may formerly have been a question of how much freedom adolescents could attain for their own group life, the new form of socialization leaves no doubt that adolescents have the right to a life and to social aspirations of their own.

CAUSES

There is no need to prove that contemporary adolescence is no longer an instance of this type. Its lack of an inner adult ideal shows up only too clearly in its life which is devoted to concrete

things. Contemporary adolescence represents instead a novel type, whose causes are to be sought primarily among the conditions of its existence.

To begin with, the importance of the adolescent group has increased enormously. Since training has been lengthened in all areas, the adolescent is exposed for a longer time to tendencies within his own age group. Since adolescents remain together for a longer period of time, these tendencies have a better chance to harden into fixed forms of group life. Since groups have become larger and more heterogeneous, their members have less of a chance to introduce paternal or adult forms into them. There arises a strong pressure towards social forms that have gained currency in all adolescent groups.

Moreover, these groups have multiplied. Countless formal and informal organizations have been added to the groupings of school-mates or friends: Organizations supported by the state, the community and other public agencies; youth movements and associations; the transitory or permanent groupings created by the activities of amusement or leisure. Altogether this adds up to an enormous amount of time spent with the same age group. Here, too, mobility and heterogeneity exert a pull in the di-

rection of universal forms specific to each age.

What is also new is the growth of secondary structures, that is, of associations organized for practical purposes in government, business, industry and other public sectors. Earlier, the adolescent found himself confined to so-called "primary groups" (family, friends, acquaintances), in which a few people engaged in a personal interchange embracing all areas of life. Even school was experienced as a primary group, though it was in reality a secondary and purposive organization. Schools with numerically limited enrolment, and close contact between parents and teachers, allowed the student to experience school as almost an extension of his home, and the teacher in a small class as a person. Any education beyond primary school remained a personal achievement of the family. Nowadays, teachers and schools are visibly tools of society; it is by means of them that society becomes the devoted and caring guardian of the adolescent. State and society directly enable him to obtain a higher education, if only by imposing an unwritten obligation on his parents. In addition,

the most diverse organizations of government, parties, unions and other public institutions assume the function of caring for the adolescent, usually through special departments. Economic and cultural activities continue this specialization by also addressing adolescents as a group. Thus the adolescent is continually isolated as a member of a group, both in reality and in his consciousness, by commands and prohibitions, advancement and education. services, programs, goods, care and counseling; and those responsible for his isolation are no longer adults related to the groups to which he belongs, but functionaries of organizations and anonymous services. His consciousness is not moulded by membership in small groups which have a social niche to exist in, though no right to a public place of their own, but by membership in a universal group of adolescents which is recognized as a social partner. Adolescence becomes a community of interests, which is allowed to make use of informal means of assuring its own interests, as well as to form organizations of its own for that purpose, complete with apparatus and functionaries. Adolescence can no longer be experienced as a particular phase of life, where adolescent self-consciousness develops in a context of structural stabilization of its manifold groupings, and of partnership with the secondary systems of society. One becomes aware of being young, not through personal experience of confrontation with an adult, but through membership in a group. Adolescence becomes thus a stationary state which lacks any tasks of its own.

Moreover, the adolescent is set free by the groups whose members vary in age. The contemporary family is not tied to relatives by a common place of residence, and hardly by communication with them. The generation of the grand-parents is missing in this isolation. Since the roles of the parents become even more intimate, the parents lose their status as members of the older generation. The relations between the generations turn into diffuse emotional ties of an individual nature, and all the more so, as the family has at least in part lost its function in important areas (education, leisure, religion, gain). The adolescent is expected to adapt emotionally to the given situation, in a way which shows hardly any traits specific to his age. Levelling of differences between the generations and companionship take the

place of division into age groups. This tendency is facilitated by the decrease in the average age of the parents. 10 Since the parents, too, have been released from the chain of the generations, they themselves show juvenile traits. But even outside the family, the adolescent hardly encounters the adult. Teachers, superiors at work, ministers, remain at the distance of secondary relations, because the social scope of the family is too narrow to include them. It is not even wide enough to enable the parents to supervise the activities of the adolescent, where occupational demands do not make this impossible in the first place. Social intercourse between adolescents has ceased to take place within the tight net of family relationships, and cannot therefore become an object of exchange between the parents. Thus here, too, the adolescent loses the model and the mirror of adult life. This condition is reflected in the fact that the contemporary family socializes children "away from itself" and towards society. Success in social life, and not immersion in the family and its values, defines the horizon of education. The definition of the end, the choice of the means, and the responsibility, are left increasingly to the adolescent. Freedom from groups whose members vary in age, and gains in the structural independence of age groups, complement each other to give modern adolescence a high degree of independence.

Adolescents gain in this way an almost unlimited access to the concrete reality of the adult world. The areas of sex and gain, adult activities of entertainment, amusement and leisure, and most fundamentally, even the use of the material culture, are open to the adolescent. The conditions are created partly by early forms of economic independence, partly by the many forms of care, and partly by his own initiative. This access is widened by the means of communication which help the adolescent to participate, if not in the reality of adult spheres of life, then at least in their semblance. To the extent that social-

¹⁰ It has been predicted that in the United States, the decreasing age of marriage and early birth of children will result by 1980 in the fact that a child will be independent and ready to go out into the world by the time his parents are forty years old. This implies that the child will have practically no contact with persons over 35 years of age. Nevertheless, this development seems to be welcomed without any misgivings whatsoever.

ization is not yet completed, adolescents are put in a position to use the adult culture selectively for their own purposes. But life cannot be carried on in a social vacuum, without stress on goals, patterns of action, expectations and norms. The natural result is that adolescents assume the task of regulating all areas of reality by fixed norms. They have to develop their own values, attitudes, customs and norms if they are not to perish in the exploration of the adult world and its unlimited potentialities. Adolescence thus rises to the rank of a subculture. It is precisely through their structural independence that adolescents are led to form the potentially uniform group that they constitute

nowadays.

The sociological causes are now visible in outline. The decisive factors are structural independence and isolation from the adults, participation in society as a whole and recognition by it, and unlimited access to adult realities instead of relief from their burdens. These causes combine to produce a thorough moulding of the adolescent by his own subculture. Accordingly, the adolescent looks upon himself as a member of a group which has attained an equal and independent status next to the adult. Since adolescence is no longer a wayside station on the road of life, the differences between adolescents and adults shrink to external and accidental features. This is why the adolescent thinks of his elders as enjoying greater independence, as shown especially in their occupational and marital roles. Adolescence must appear to him as a mere delay in social maturity, whose benefits he enjoys anyway in the form of substitutes. However, the integration of adolescents into society has in reality accelerated. Compared with the nineteenth century, economic independence and the age of marriage are attained earlier. But even in comparison with previous centuries, it is at least misleading to speak categorically of delayed integration, in view of the fact that considerable portions of the adult population either never attained the economic independence that makes marriage and a family possible, or won it only as a conditional right to use their parents' resources as long as the parents were still alive. The rise and development of adolescence is explained not by the undeniable divergence between sexual and social maturity, but by the formation of adolescent groups. Only in

this way can we understand why integration into family and occupation no longer means the end of adolescence. The adolescent moulded by his own groups is hardly endowed with dispositions which would allow him to change quickly into the adult state. He retains his ties to his contemporaries, his dependence on their world, and the habits of their subculture, for an exceedingly long time. And he remains all the more isolated at work from his older colleagues as here, too, the utilitarian organization of modern occupational life disguises the adult behind his function.

SOCIALIZATION

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What becomes, under these conditions, of the function of socialization? Does the high degree of independence allow the adolescent to be completely integrated in society? It should be noted here, first of all, that the occupational structure has become largely independent of the person of the employee. Occupations may be learned, taught, assigned and performed with little regard to attitudes and views in other spheres of life. The continuation of the occupational structure is assured at least at this level, and the remaining integration of the adolescent irrelevant. But the other roles must, of course, also be learnt if the individual is to function in society, or if society itself is to function. To be a husband, father, guardian, club member, bank customer, citizen, consumer, member of a class or religious community or party, requires widespread knowledge and deep-seated attitudes.

The decisive fact that the essentials of such adult roles are no longer learnt in the family, is the starting-point for a sociology of the family and youth. Due to the structural growth of society beyond the family, there is not even an alternative. The family is left with little more to do than socialize the child

¹¹ The best longer discussions of contemporary adolescence are to be found in P. H. Landis, Adolescence and Youth, New York, 1952, and H. Schelsky, Die skeptische Generation, Düsseldorf, 1957. It should be noted that in each case we are dealing with an analysis of adolescence in a certain country. For a more general treatment, see Parsons and Bales, Family, Socialization and Interaction Process, Glencoe, Illinois, 1955. This work also contains some evidence for the thesis that the contemporary family socializes "away from itself."

by teaching him the elementary lesson of how to master his body, language, impulses and wishes. It is true that, beyond this, the child acquires general orientations and motivations, expectations and knowledge, which set the frame for his later life. But on the whole, it must be said that adult roles are no longer learnt in the family. This is at once obvious in the case of roles that presuppose special knowledge (e.g. occupational roles) or demand a systematic initiation. It is also clear in the case of roles played in secondary systems: These roles demand objective and impersonal behavior for which the child is not prepared by his intimate and emotional relations in the family. But it is significant that the family can no longer form decisively the child's comprehension of primary roles (e.g. marital and friendship roles).

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To this negative observation should be added the positive insight that the socialization of the adolescent is accomplished nowadays in adolescent groups and by their subculture. This is clearly the case for special roles which have to be learnt in groups connected with secondary structures. Thus roles in religious communities or political parties are learnt today largely in and through special youth groups organized by these institutions. More important is the fact that the adolescent subculture forms the general comprehension of roles. This is not to overlook that different educational institutions contribute to the socialization of the adolescent, along with personal experience and the information offered by radio, technical books, cinema, television, novels and magazines, on the free market of realities. But all knowledge and attitudes acquired in these ways are subject ultimately to the interpretation and legislation of adolescence as a group and a subculture. This certainly serves a purpose, since without social support and a mirror, the adolescent could not master the boundless reality put within his reach. He needs values, norms, orientations, attitudes and habits to encourage and to justify his behavior in the face of this reality. The usurpation of adult areas of life goes functionally together with the introduction of norms into these areas. Thus access to adult realities goes together with the rise of a subculture. Without morals, customs, habits and values of his own, and without a social background and a mirror, the adolescent would remain helpless in the face of the realities open to him.

There is one item that should be specially emphasized among all the knowledge, information, orientations, motivations, habits, attitudes, expectations, conceptions and connections transmitted to the adolescent either directly or indirectly by his subculture. As indicated, the majority of adult roles are performed in connection with secondary structures. The knowledge of the tasks required for this is acquired through education and experience. But the roles are not exhausted by the tasks assigned to them. In concrete situations, they also include relations between persons. This becomes clear in the case of occupational roles, where the assignment of tasks according to plan is not enough to regulate the relations between the bearers of the roles. There always remain questions of prestige, cooperation, of having one's way. Right here, and not in the tasks to be assigned, lie the fundamental difficulties presented by roles in secondary systems. And it is here that the adolescent group is by its nature in a position to prepare the adolescent. This is done partly through the ramifications of the group into secondary systems. More important perhaps, the inner structure of adolescent groups encourages those very relationships that are typical of secondary systems. The potentially universal nature of the group, its size and mobility, its inevitable lack of a permanent distribution of status, and the equally inevitable fickle and fashion-conscious nature of its subculture, all go against personal relations between friends and promote instead shallow and indiscriminate contacts. Frequent social intercourse with numerous and frequently changing contemporaries leads to an oversocialization, which develops the ability to get along with everybody and to show the right face to each. It instils in this way the general attitudes and opinions that are so typical nowadays in secondary systems.

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We will thus have to get used to the idea that the socialization of the adolescent has turned into self-socialization. The home ceases to be a bridge into society and becomes instead a dead end. No longer does the child grow into society through a gradual extension (and, of course, resultant modification) of the ties and relations between him and his parents and relatives, as illustrated by the common "uncle"-relation to outsiders. The narrow social scope of the family makes this impossible. Instead, the adolescent groups serve the child as stepping-stones into

society. They prepare him for important social structures, convey knowledge, views and attitudes to him, and pave his way to the realities that have become accessible to him. This road into the adult world does not, however, lead to a rupture with the parental generation. Whereas only a short while ago an adolescent had to break away from the confines of his family to gain the knowledge and experience which he needed for his future life. or thought he needed, this appears to be no longer typical for the developed form of the industrial society. Even children are nowadays set partly free by the family, and given immediate access to some areas of social and adult life. It is well known how early children and adolescents "know the facts of life," and even create to that extent the impression of being grown up. The family recognizes this in principle by socializing children "away from itself." It is thus typical of modern society that to the socialization of the child in the family is superimposed at an early stage a socialization from outside which is essentially effected and directed by adolescent groups. While a child will inevitably experience subjective difficulties in the early phase of adolescence, this must not be allowed to obscure the fact that there is a fundamental continuity in his integration into society. If adolescents do not really revolt any longer against their elders, the reason is that this is no longer necessary. The structural independence of adolescence assures them a continuous initiation into society. The extension of the adolescent phase into the later phase of childhood is an expression of this continuity. Even the child, and increasingly the adolescent, find that the ways that lead into society without leading through the family are well paved.

Participation in homogeneous age groups is then at present typical of the early phases of life. These groups are tied up with society in two ways: On the one hand, to the extent that they have free access to real life, partly through the information handed out to them, and partly through their usurpation of adult areas of life; and on the other hand, to the extent that children and adolescents are directly claimed by society through its various institutions and organizations. This claim may in the extreme case assume the form of the state youth, familiar from totalitarian countries. But such a claim is also made in Western countries.

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where it goes beyond purely educational institutions and includes the various organizations of the state, parties, business and culture, as well as many other associations which aim especially at the adolescent. Modern society cannot in principle give up this claim. It is by their ties with society that adolescent groups develop the direction and the continuity, which give to their influence on the adolescent the character of socialization into the roles of adult society.

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To what extent will such a form of socialization have to lead to social changes? This question of the significance of contemporary adolescence for society as a whole is easily obscured by the obvious fact that adolescents have to assume adult roles whether they want to or not. In view of this fact, the difficulties which every new generation creates for itself, for older generations and for society, appear to reduce to recurrent but always temporary crises. Even if it is granted that this form of socialization leads necessarily to changes in some roles, the concept of a role is little suited for grasping changes in many roles in a single direction, or the whole significance of such changes. The concept of a person, though far more difficult, presents itself at this point as a far more suitable means of conceptualization.

We can start here with the simple consideration that many properties show a certain age distribution. Some properties can only be acquired after others are secured. They can therefore only be had at a certain age. Now it is clear that in modern society, the properties specific to the higher age groups are progressively lost. Since adults are excluded from the world of children and adolescents, examples of adult behavior are simply missing. Where they are present, they cannot become fully effective because of the structural independence of youth and the narrow social scope of the primary groups. But it is not only the properties of the higher age groups that are lost in this way. The properties of the lower age groups also lose the depth and strength they had when they were links in a chain of properties characteristic of each age. The exclusion of the later phases of life represents a fundamental breakdown of the system of age

groups, which can only function as a whole when its component roles and properties are attuned to one another. Social groups are now being formed which show only a minimum of orientation towards one another. Behavior comes to be determined increasingly and of necessity by the earlier age groups. The puerile character of modern society, which was mentioned in the beginning, follows from the social exclusion of the later age groups which leaves the earlier ones free to socialize themselves.

It is not only the properties proper of the age groups that are thus lost. With them disappear the characteristic marks that distinguish different roles in a society divided into age groups. As long as a role is learnt through continuous adaptation to the adults, it reveals its implications for the whole of life and for the entire person. It has a place and a function in the course of the learner's life, and significant ties with other areas of life. Such higher-order functions and formations extending over the entire person are lost when a role is no longer rehearsed in the presence of the adult, but as it were copied from him. Roles are then reduced to their technical requirements, and can no longer go beyond what is immediately given here and now. Not only do they lose their deeper values in this way; they are also isolated from one another. This reduction yields a mechanism of drives which is dependent of the situation, and devoid of a deeper order for the roles to enter in.

If we apply this to the structure of the person, we shall have to speak of a lowering of its level. For a person is not a mere juxtaposition of properties, as little as society is an aggregate of roles, or culture a sum of elements. Everywhere we find texture, coordination, organization, and in short, structure. There are thus different degrees of organization of the personality.¹² Anthropologists have shown in a dramatic way that the

¹² The social sciences have been reluctant to acknowledge this inevitable consequence, for understandable reasons. It is true that its acknowledgement might easily lead to evaluations of which the distinction between "primitive" and "civilized" peoples is still remembered as an unfortunate example. It is also worth noting that the structure of a person has so many dimensions, whose relative importance is not easily evaluated, that it is virtually impossible to apply this concept in a comparison of individual cultures. On the other hand, this concept can very well be used in speaking of single stages of a culture or of

organization of the personality depends on the roles attributed to the child or adolescent in the early phases of his life. The number of these roles, their differentiation, complexity and fixation, all play a part in this process. In the light of these investigations, the reduction of roles to the immediate and the concrete, and their isolation from one another, signify a decrease in the structural complexity of the person. Since different roles do not add up any longer to a comprehensive perspective, for lack of significant ties between the roles, the personality created by socialization loses in structure. This can be seen for example by examining the contents of the personality. Feelings and conceptions cannot be differentiated to a sufficient extent or in a durable manner, because the contacts with contemporaries are relatively fleeting, impersonal and without depth, and relatively uniform, and the contemporaries themselves can show only little differentiation. For the same reasons, the feelings and conceptions cannot be sufficiently integrated. There is no room for more complex contents to arise which would be more clearly differentiated as well as ordered and unified. The same thing can also be seen by examining the substrate of the mechanism of drives, where highly complicated reactions must be relayed and made automatic by being made habitual, so that external actions and inner states, purposes, conceptions and impulses are so effectively stabilized, frustrated, differentiated, modified, superimposed and integrated that they constitute a personal mechanism of action. In either case, it is a matter of erecting an organized structure which would overcome the dependence of the system of action on given situations. But more highly organized structures can only arise where small and stable groups shape and differentiate the relations between adolescents and adults. Only here is the context of action enriched by the meanings and shaped by the values it needs, and only thus can the mechanism of ac-

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general types of culture which are suitably formed. For similar views, see A. Gehlen, Die Seele im technischen Zeitalter, Hamburg, 1957, especially p. 58 ff. On the connection between socialization and organization of the personality, which is mentioned below, see especially M. Mead, "Age Patterning in Personality, Development," in D. G. Haring (eds.), Personal Character and Cultural Milieu, Syracuse University Press, 1948, in addition to the specific discussions of this topic.

tion find enough relief from the immediate demands of the situation.¹³ The structural level of the personality will therefore come to be lowered, compared with its former level. Hand in hand with the oversocialization of the adolescent who is subjected at an early age to the varied but undifferentiated, fleeting and shallow influences of homogeneous age groups, and to the demands of real life, equipped only with the minimum of social

forms, goes his undersocialization as a person.

Observers from all over the world, whether psychologists, educators, psychiatrists or sociologists, are all agreed on this. For the extreme cases, which are becoming more numerous, they are in the habit of using such terms as "shallow," "empty," "without a backbone" and "driven by impulse." These terms describe the turn to the extreme that adolescent forms of behavior have taken, as a result of a deficient socialization of the person. Similar phenomena are also known for children. Delayed readiness for school, lack of concentration, blind impulsiveness, emotional poverty and moral turpitude are all on the increase. This should be another lesson for the sociologist not to treat youth as a separate phase of life. What is characteristic of youth is on the one hand, its exclusion from the sequence of ages that culminates in adulthood, and on the other, its inclusion in society beginning even with the child. Adolescence begins nowadays even before the first step in socialization has been taken, that is, before the fundamental task of shaping the child's personality is completed. Not even here is there time for imposing the cultural forms which used to provide the framework for any conflict between the adolescent and the world. Independent relations to society begin already in the case of the child to obstruct and set aside the results of his early socialization. Childhood is therefore no longer a phase which is complete in itself. It anticipates the problems of the adolescent, as witnessed already by the acceleration of growth and puberty, which can be looked upon as answers to the challenges held out by real life insofar as it has become accessible. Thus puberty also loses its character as a

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¹³ For related views, expressed in connection with the problem of learning a language, see P. Schrecker, "The Family: Conveyance of Tradition," in R. N. Anshen, *The Family: Its Function and Destiny*, New York, 1949.

decisive turning-point, a tendency which is underlined by the

growing influence of adolescence on childhood.

We are thus dealing with deep-reaching changes which amount to a loss in differentiation and integration of the structure of the personality. The higher-order forms and connections are being demolished, and the more elementary parts of the system of action are thereby given a greater margin of vacillation and more independence. It is therefore not surprising that investigation has shown these changes to extend as far as the sensory awareness of children and adolescents. Apart from this, the significance of this change for such diverse areas as politics. family and education is easy to overlook in general, and difficult to specify in particular. Suffice it therefore here to turn up briefly another facet of the problem. Let us just observe that a large and probably predominant part of our cultural heritage, insofar as it exceeds mere knowledge or techniques concerning mastery over the environment, is inseparably connected with conceptions, attitudes and feelings which are either in themselves specific to higher age groups or can only be conceived or experienced by reference to these groups; and this is true not just of European culture. The elimination of properties specific to higher age groups is therefore equivalent to a loss of essential parts of our intellectual and human heritage. This is at once obvious in the case of our literary heritage, which meets increasingly with incomprehension and ineffectiveness. These are not to be explained by appealing to lack of interest or by reference to a historical gap. What is wrong is, rather, the absence of those prerequisites which would enable the contents to come to life. To be struck by literature and to take part in it presupposes that those regions of the soul where literature is at home be developed. The subjective limits of the realm of the real are set by what can be experienced as real. For a mechanism of drives, tied to given situations and devoid of more highly organized structures, reality shrinks to the here and now, which is the only reality that can be experienced by it. But it may be said quite generally that most of the more complicated thoughts and feelings, or even all structures and contents which are essentially mental, have very different dimensions, and demand in particular very different spatio-temporal perspectives before they

can become personal possessions. They can acquire relevance only where they can be projected onto a life surveyed subjectively as a whole, or onto highly personal relations between individuals; and these transcend the immediate existence of the here and now.

CONCLUSION

Every author has the right to cast a final glance into the distance. To exercise this right, let me observe that during the last century a well-intentioned but ill-advised saying made the rounds of the globe. It was that the sciences of man had fallen behind the sciences of nature. The saying was well-meant because it drew attention to human affairs, but ill-advised because it disguised and justified the capital error of modern thought. The sciences concerned with man are expected to remove the evils we suffer from. But this is the way of all sick people who expect the doctor to cure them, but are not prepared to give up their habits. It is to eat the cake and have it, too. Thus the sociology of youth is also expected to give advice. And since there can be no scarcity of manifold connections in social life, every proposal, anywhere from sanitary installations to educational or welfare measures, can be supported by verifiable correlations. Sometimes it is only the symptoms that are cured, and sometimes one has to employ means that destroy the desired end. The latter must often be the case where the child or adolescent is to be effectively assisted by new institutionalized forms of help. By concentrating on the goal, one is bound to overlook that every institution of this kind will help to separate adolescents from adults and to weld adolescents together as a group. The price to be paid is at best a temporary success of such efforts.

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We must therefore keep the nearest cause firmly in mind. And this is to be found purely and simply in the growing autonomy of economic activities, which promote in hundreds of ways the independence of children and adolescents, without giving them time to attain the degree of inner independence which would allow them to absorb their culture effectively. It is thus the early economic independence of the adolescent, gained only recently, which may be regarded as the fact that completes

his exclusion from the chain of age groups, since it alters his view of life and fixes it on that part of reality which can be immediately attained or experienced. Tocqueville recognized already in a small sample how important lack of continuity between the generations can be, and the respective importance of the economic order. He saw clearly that the idea of early economic independence which he found expressed in American laws concerning inheritance, would necessarily lead to a situation where, in many areas and especially in intellectual and personal matters, accumulation became difficult, social continuity was endangered, and every generation was forced to make a new beginning. But what was then an isolated idea has now turned into an allinclusive fact. Lack of continuity between the generations is the fact, and the destruction of the person and the shrinking of the real that can be experienced are its consequences. Essential parts of history and of human achievement are threatened with loss.

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Industrialization has irrevocably limited the social scope of the family, called adolescent groups into existence, and in both these ways given adolescence a structural independence. There is nothing to be done about these facts, which are not even in principle new. The problem comes only to a head when we turn to the fact that economic interests, irrespective of all others, and by exploiting the technical possibilities, present adolescents with the challenges and opportunities of the realities or pseudo-realities, and thereby furnish them with the contents of their radically independent subculture, as well as with the means for creating it. These economic interests include, in a broader sense, the psychology of wish-fulfilment, which is related to them by the priority it gives to economic aspects, and which raises the idea of a smooth and early initiation of the adolescent into adult roles to an acknowledged first principle. In this way, it gives a free hand to the various associations and organizations to compete for the adolescent; a competition which under these conditions can only be effectively engaged in if the temptations of real life are used as the weapon.

Where relief from the burdens of real life belongs thus to the past, and is yet essential for the rounding out of the youthful personality, the sciences of man can only try to cure the symptoms. But if they are to remain true to their tradition and their

Contemporary Adolescence

task, they must reject the very role that is attributed to them on all sides, that of being arts of curing evil by dispensing patent medicines, without making any demands on society and without receiving any help from men. As sciences of man, they must also show that a given evil cannot simply be taken out of the context of choice, decision and responsibility. To keep awake the awareness of the fundamental conditions of human and social life, and to point out in particular the complexities and difficulties of becoming a human being and the precarious foundations of all mental life, must be among their most sacred duties at a time when they are saddled with the subordinate role of the magician, along with the responsibility for the consequences, not by any means of their own shortcomings, but of the general neglect of human affairs.

A CHINESE CONCEPTION OF THE HERO

Whoever knows a little about China-even very little-knows, in one way or another, about the Taoist Immortals, although our knowledge may be limited to the representation of them on a bit of sculptured jade, on a Han mirror or in some wood engraving. One has heard of them as an essential part of Chinese folklore. In the book of Taoist saints, the Liesien tchouan, they may be observed in all their oddness, living on pine cones or the "marrow of stones" and flying off into the air toward the apotheosis of some unknown paradise. This aspect of the Immortals has been studied often and well. But there is another aspect to the Immortals no less important, a philosophical aspect which, I believe, deserves our attention. Sun Yat-sen, the "Father of the Chinese Republic," is certainly not given the name of "Hidden Immortal" (Yat-sen, Yi-sien) out of a simple interest in folklore, and the heroes of the Chinese novel, Kia Pao-vu of the first Hong-leou mong, dedicated themselves to achieve the way of the Immortals for reasons that went deeper and were more intelligent than mere superstitious emulation of some grotesqueries

Translated by S. Alexander.

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of occult folklore. No, the Chinese Immortal is a veritable hero of the same stamp as Saints of the Christian tradition and like the latter he embodies a religious philosophy of the highest inspiration.

My purpose today is to present this Taoist hero as he was conceived by a man of letters of the 3rd century of our era. I have chosen this author because he makes it possible for us to examine the Immortals from several points of view: first as a philosophical conception, then, as a phenomenon which actually existed—we will make a visit with him to a man who was considered to be an Immortal—and, finally, because this author lets us enter into his intimate thoughts and doubts about the very existence of these beings: paradoxically, it is an agnostic who best permits us to understand, I believe, what the Immortal represented for the Chinese of his epoch.

The author of whom I speak is named Jouan Tsi and he lived from 210 to 263 A.D. during the period of the philosophical Renaissance and political and social revolt which preceded what one might call the Chinese Middle Ages. He belonged to the aristocracy and was already renowned during his lifetime as one of the most brilliant writers of the capital; posterity has reserved a very high place for him among the greatest Chinese poets

of all time.

His work is naturally divided into two very distinct parts: his poetry and his prose. This division is not simply a formal one; it also describes a very important distinction with regard to the basis of his work. Jouan Tsi's prose seems to represent only an external and scholastic aspect of his thought; his poetry, the deepest and most personal aspects of his emotions. Thus, we should not seek too much for novel or personal elements in the description of the Taoist hero contained in his *Biography of Master Great Man*.

Jouan Tsi contents himself with presenting to us a hero entirely drawn from traditional Taoism, but he does so with so much force and energy, that we cannot help thinking that he is painting the portrait of an ideal which he held to, even if this ideal did not entirely satisfy him.

The first Taoist texts, dating from about the 4th century B.C., and, in particular, the text of *Tchouang-tseu*, offer us two

kinds of heroes: the philosopher, the sage, often represented by Tchouang-tseu himself; and the exceptional beings called Immortals who are found at the boundary between the human and the super-human. These two species are not utterly distinct: the Immortals are also philosophers or sages, and the philosophers are often endowed with powers which we tend to attribute rather to super-human beings. These two categories represent the two poles of the Taoists: the first, the sages, remain closest to ordinary men; they are withdrawn from the world and passions, but they are incapable of realizing that bodily detachment which would give them eternal life; they are born and they die. But the Immortals, called in the text of Tchouang-tseu Fulfilled Men, Spirit-Men, or True Men, render themselves corporeally immortal by means of hygienic practices, and thus can enjoy forever a kind of mystical ecstasy which they have experienced. Such a theory is difficult for us to understand, accustomed as we are to conceive of a personal soul which can-and even must-separate itself from the body in order to unite with the Absolute at the moment of mystical ecstasy. We are repulsed at the thought that matter can participate in such a union. But the Chinese do not distinguish so clearly what we consider—or at least what classic philosophy considered—as the two distinct aspects of man. To the Chinese, man was a microcosm which it was necessary to keep intact in order to keep him alive.

We find the following description of the Immortals in the

first chapter of the Tchouang-tseu:

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Far away on mount Kou-ye reside the Men-Spirits. Their flesh and their skin are like ice and snow; they are subtle and gracious as virgins. They eat no grain but breathe the wind and drink the dew. They rise on the mist of clouds; they lead flying dragons; and thus they wander beyond the Four Seas (that is, beyond the world). When they focus their minds, they keep creatures safe from epidemics, and see to it that there is a good harvest every year.

These Immortals of Tchouang-tseu are the direct ancestors of Jouan Tsi's Great Man. Like them, and by a rather unexpected shift of powers, they derive their magical talents from the fact that they are so free of everything partial, egotistical and personal in themselves, that they become identified with the universe, and this identification liberates them of the weight of themselves.

Thus they are enabled to stroll through space like solitary atoms. On the other hand, they are so strictly linked to nature that they might be considered responsible for its cycles, the ripening

of grain, etc.

The Biography of Master Great Man by Jouan Tsi is written in precisely the same manner, a tone of liberation from the relativistic world which one finds in the second chapter of Tchouang-tseu. The entire Biography is a sort of poetical dialectic of grandeur or freedom whereby Jouan Tsi tries-successively negating the partial points of view of three so-called great men-to arrive at a state of absolute grandeur or absolute freedom in which man finds himself released of everything binding him to the world such as we know it: he is released from human society, from space, from weight, and from time. The structure of the Biograpy is relatively simple. There is a short description of the Great Man, followed by three rather distinct sections in which the Great Man is seen mocking in turn three human types: the bigoted social Confucianist; the upright, but bitter, politician who has retired from the world in disdain and hatred; and the simple wood gatherer, a fatalist living outside of the passions of this world, but, withal, a man of very small vision, ignorant of the real cosmic grandeur of the way of living of a Taoist hero. After having disembarrassed himself of these inferior beings, the Great Man lets himself go on into a long description, sometimes in prose, sometimes in verse, of his cosmic life and of his inter-stellar and extra-universal rambles. The exalted tone of this section, longest of the work, recalls Nietzsche's best pages. The last section is a very short coda leading us back to earth by a brief critique of ordinary man incapable of following the Great Man in his flights above the world of distinctions and pettiness.

The Biography of Master Great Man belongs to the great literary tradition of shamanist writings, a tradition going back to at least the 4th century B.C. in China. This tradition, therefore, was fully "civilized" when Jouan Tsi wrote more than half a millennium later. Thus, we need not dwell too long on superficial resemblances to other traditional writings. It is clear, from the beginning, that Jouan Tsi's shaman, Master Great Man, is based on a philosophy, and not on ancient folklore or magic

practices. This philosophy is the mystical philosophy of Tchouangtseu, as is clear from the very first paragraph of the *Biography*. According to Jouan Tsi, the Master:

considered ten thousand leagues like one step, a thousand years like a morning. When he walked he arrived nowhere; when he stopped he found himself nowhere. All his searchings were in the Great Tao and he took no temporary lodging.

From the Absolute point of view, everything is relative: distance, time; and since the Great Man knows that, and since he regards everything as perfectly united, not admitting of any real particularization, he cannot proceed to any particular place, he cannot reside anywhere, because he is in the One, the Tao. One could even go further: the Great Man is not only in the One—for that would imply a contradiction—he is the One. His complete impartiality renders him capable of assimilating himself with this unity in the complexity which is our world. He becomes the world itself.

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The first section of the *Biography* is by far the most celebrated, because Jouan Tsi deals with the most important of his interlocutors—the Confucianist—and also because he deals most violently with him. A letter was sent to Master Great Man describing the virtues of the perfect Confucianist, ending in asking him how he can resist the obvious charms of a personality of such high morals. Here is the beginning of the letter:

Nothing in the universe is more honored than an upright man (Confucianist). He always wears the same colors; his expression is composed according to fixed rules; his conduct is in agreement with a fixed model; his words obey fixed laws. When he begins to stand up, he bends himself in two at right angles with his hands folded in front of him as if he were holding a drum. For each one of his activities and his rest there is a rule...(for all his movements) there is a well fixed law. His prudence is renewed every day; he carefully chooses the ground on which to walk. His heart is, as it were, ice-clogged, so full is it of fear and respect. He disciplines himself; he cultivates himself...His only fear is to commit some fault.

The Confucianist lives in a closed universe where everything is completely ordered; a little place is assigned to him where he must remain during his life: it is enough for him to follow Confucianist rules in order to achieve riches, happiness, and

glory. The Confucianist seeks to encase himself in a tiny corner, to wall himself around with interdictions regarding morality or even geomancy. But he remains among mankind. Could it be that Master Great Man is not aware of the fact that his solitude and heterodox manner of living have made him the laughing stock of all honest people?

Up there, Master Great Man sighed agreeably, and leaning on the clouds replied to him: "What thou hast said, shows that thou hast understood nothing."

And he develops a more or less complete traditional cosmogony in order to demonstrate the pettiness of Confucianist reasoning judged on a cosmic scale. He continues with an allegory, borrowed, it is true, from Tchouang-tseu, but developed by Jouan Tsi with a great deal of originality. The Great Man speaks to the Confucianist in these terms:

Do you not see those lice dwelling in a pair of breeches? When one of the lice hides in a deep seam or takes refuge in some old silk, he thinks he has found a house of good luck. When, out of discretion, he doesn't dare forsake his seams, or in his battles, he doesn't dare quit the breeches, he thinks he's fighting according to the rules. When he is hungry and bites his man, he thinks he's found an endless source of food. But when the fire crackles on the burning heap (where old clothes are being burned) and their cities are reduced to cinders, their capitals destroyed: then all the lice perish in their breeches and cannot get out! Well then, what difference is there between you, the upright man (Confucianist) who sticks so to your little divisions (ritualists) and a louse in a pair of breeches?

This small bit of bravura, the most celebrated part of the *Biography*, does not fail to come to the point despite its violence. The Confucianist at the time of Jouan Tsi had lost the universalist and truly human feeling which had animated his ancient predecessors. Having become the State religion under the Han dynasty, Confucianism had hardened into pure ritualism and into being the reactionary defender of the social order. On the other hand, it was getting more and more rigid and artificial to the degree that scientific knowledge went beyond it. Philology undermined the traditional interpretations of the Canonical Books. Geography, and especially astronomy, threw cosmology into confusion, and Taoist metaphysics gained more and more ground among the most advanced thinkers.

The Great Man, in any case, cannot be compared with a louse frozen in a pair of breeches: he is not fixed anywhere; he is fluid, subtle, inconstant.

He arrives from the East on a cloud; he commands the West wind. With the Yin he keeps his femininity; supported on the Yang he is male.

He is to be found neither in the East nor in the West; he is neither man nor woman.

To defeat the Confucianist on his own ground, the Great Man then displays his political theories. As one might expect he is a pure anarchist. He even goes much further than the ancient Taoists in that he would abolish all political institutions, even that of the Prince, which no thinker before him had ever dared touch.

But the Great Man pays no heed to political theories and leaves the Confucianist, saying to him:

Now I'm going to fly away beyond heaven and earth, taking the Transformations (of the universe) as my friend. In the morning I will eat in the Valley of the Sun, in the evening I will drink in the Western Sea. I will transform myself according to the mutations (of the universe) in order to bring myself back to the beginning with the Tao...

And following the movement of the earth (and here he goes in the direction of the sun, that is to say, in the direction of time, since it is the sun's rotation which produces day and night) the Great Man remains as young as the universe, eternally re-commencing nature's movement, renewing himself at every instant.

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The second man who meets the Great Man is a tender soul disillusioned by man's cruelty since his fall from innocence.

I will not permit men, he says, to be my companions: I prefer to have trees and stones as my neighbors...I see like a bird; I will die like a beast. I've buried myself here and here I will leave my bones; I will not return to my former life!

Having heard about Master Great Man, this man hastens to meet him, feeling that he is a fellow soul.

The Great Man loses no time in undeceiving him. He utters

a series of paradoxes to show that the Great Man does not commit himself, either one way or the other:

Up above, the Master sketched a rainbow to protect himself from dust, and opened up a snow-parasol to guard himself against the sun's rays. And then he turned around to say (to the bitter man): "The True Man of the Vast Beginning is like the root of the Great (Universe). When he concentrates his breathe and unifies his will, all Creation imbibes its being there. When he withdraws, one does not see his back; when he steps forward, one does not see his face...Thus the Perfect Man has no residence, (nonetheless) he treats the cosmos like his guest...the Perfect Man does not act, (however) the cosmos is his business. He does not know the difference between loving and hating.

A Great Man does not withdraw from the world out of hatred: he hates nothing; he does not deflect himself from one thing in order to go toward another.

The Great Man's third interlocutor is a simple wood gatherer. When the Great Man asks him how he can be satisfied with such a simple life, the wood gatherer replies with a long series of examples drawn from the history of the fall of the great. He ends with a song on the same fatalistic theme. The Great Man approves of it in part, but he finds that the wood gatherer's defeatist philosophy is too narrow. He replies with a song that has become celebrated, in which he takes the theme of the fall of great men and lifts it, as is his custom, to a cosmic level. It is no longer the fall of a dynasty, or of a celebrated man, as the wood gatherer had described it: it is the fall, rather, of the entire world which he is describing, and he derives his particular point of view from it: a proud and absolute indifference. The song begins:

If heaven and earth are smashed to pieces,
And if the six directions open up,
If the stars and constellations fall,
And if the sun and the moon collapse,
I will frisk about and I will leap:
Why should I take such things to heart?

The Great Man is absolutely free—the explosion of the very world itself leaves him indifferent: never having given any importance to anything in this world he would not regret at all if it should split asunder. It is this indifference which serves at

the base of Taoist ethics, as love is at the base of Christian ethics. The Christians believe that the ideal world will be a fraternal world; the Taoists, on the other hand, believe that the ideal world will be one in which men ignore each other, like fish happily swimming in the water. The German romantic, Novalis, in a *Hymne an die Nacht* makes use of an image very close to that of Master Great Man's breaking-up of the world, but in Novalis the result of this cataclysm is very different.

Die Sternwelt wird zerfliessen Zum goldnen Lebenswein. Wir werden sie geniessen Und lichte Sterne sein. Die Lieb' ist frei gegeben Und keine Trennung mehr. Es wogt das volle Leben Wie ein unendlich Meer...

[The world of the stars will dissolve / Into the golden wine of life. / We are going to savor of it / To become brilliant stars. / Love will be freely given / And we will separate no more. / All life rocks / Like the endless sea.]

This somewhat sweetish tone is very far from that of the Great Man: he is neither hateful, nor filled with love for other beings, and he desires neither to be joined with them nor to remove himself from them.

After having left the wood gatherer, the Great Man, in that part of the *Biography* which recalls somewhat more the tradition of the shamanist stories, walks to the palace of the Immortals, witnesses a mystic ballet given by the Five Emperors, meets some celestial beauties, etc. But "his heart is not pleased to remain for a long time in the same place," and these little folkloristic excursions satisfy him only for a short while: he quits this palace of myths and departs further from the world, englobing the entire cosmos by his attitude of being superbly detached from everything. It is at this moment that one notes a small contradiction in his attitude. While he

Swiftly flies into the rosy morning mist, Hugely, savagely, unattached, He goes far away and finds himself alone, companionless. He leans against a balustrade mounted with jewels and looks back And he is filled with pity for the suffering of the world below. Well, where is that lovely indifference in this pity? Without wishing to try to explain this contradiction—neither Jouan Tsi or the Great Man are given to contradiction—I believe that, in this case, Jouan Tsi is only imitating the shamanist tradition. It is known, in fact, that the shaman, at the time of his ascension to heaven, often stoops with pity, thinking about the fate of those whom he has left on earth. Perhaps it is this traditional and contradictory phrase which makes it possible for a historian of the Chinese People's Republic to see in Jouan Tsi a precursor of the Chinese democratic revolution. One can hardly find such sentiments anywhere else in Jouan Tsi's writing. Besides, his "democratic" pity doesn't last very long, for in the following phrase he says

These earthlings base their conduct on the distinction which they make between good and evil: How can one associate with such persons?

My banner makes a rainbow floating in the wind;
My cloud-flag lets itself flap freely:
I rejoice to stroll beyond heaven!

In this poem also, he encounters frightful cataclysm which leave

him perfectly calm.

Much of this last section is in rhymed verse, sometimes sevenfoot lines, sometimes three, and the tone intensifies until it becomes a kind of dithyramb in which the Great Man (then called the True Man) appears as a kind of saviour for, thanks to his detachment, he is able, paradoxically, to unite himself with nature conceived as the All; and this union makes him capable, like Tchouang-tseu's Spirit-Men, of helping the men of this world. Here is part of these final messianic stanzas:

The True Man walks
Leading eight dragons.
He illuminates the sun and the moon
And unfurls a flag made of clouds.
Sometimes he goes here, sometimes there, as he wishes,
Happy wherever he goes.
The True Man strolls in the Great Staircase (of Heaven)

Heaven's Gate opens; A very fine rain begins to fall; The wind shifts.

The Yang-tze and the Yellow River become clear; There is no more mud in the River Lo! The clouds disappear:

The True Man comes! The True Man comes! There is nothing but joy!

If the Taoist philosophy of Master Great Man does not reveal very much originality, Jouan Tsi's tone, in this strange, very emotional *finale*, betrays the sincerity of his thought. The Immortal who is the Great Man certainly exercises a very strong attraction on Jouan Tsi. But, the Immortal whom he described is scarcely anything else but a philosophical principle—the Absolute showing similarities to Absolutes "described" by mystics at any time. Let us now see if in his life he did not approach a little closer to an Immortal in flesh and blood.

According to certain sources, the Biography of Master Great Man was written after a visit which Jouan Tsi made to a Taoist hermit named Souen Teng; other sources claims further that the latter served as model for Master Great Man himself. Let us first read the biography of this personage and then let us visit him with Jouan Tsi.

Souen Teng had no house but he resided in an earthen grotto which he had scooped out of the mountain. In summer he made his shirts out of woven grass; in winter he allowed his hair to grow long to cover himself.

All this shows us that he lived freely in the heart of nature. Chinese modesty does not even permit the Immortals to enter into what the more libertine Europeans would call a state of nature.

Souen Teng loved to read the Book of Changes and he played on a singlestringed cithern.

Books in general were condemned by Taoists except for the Three Mysteries, the Book of Changes, the great philosophical work which endeavored to explain the universe insofar as it is

an uninterrupted series of mutations; and the two Taoist classics, the Tao-tö-king and the Tchouang-tseu. The cithern often accompanies mystic meditations, but this celebrated one-stringed cithern of Souen Teng seems more symbolic than musical: the cithern ordinarily had seven strings; this single-stringed instrument of Souen Teng surely symbolized the One, the unity which is the Tao. The Biography continues:

Those who saw him all loved him, and rejoiced to see him.

If the Great Man remains indifferent to everyone and everything, this total indifference means that he regards the everybody with equanimity, with an objectivity which can be as appealing as some of the sentimental and "active" benevolence of a so-called Christian "saint."

Souen Teng was by nature without hatred or anger. Once, he had been thrown into the water, in order to see if he would lose his temper, but when he came out he burst out laughing.

From time to time he wandered among men and certain people in the houses which he passed prepared clothes or food for him. Actually he kept nothing, for, after having made his adieus, he threw it all away.

Which leaves us to understand that he fed himself either simply on his breathe, or on mushrooms or other natural products, and that he had no other need of human sustenance.

Once he went into the mountains of Yi-yang (southwest of Lo-yang) where the charcoal burners lived. Knowing that he was an extraordinary man they spoke to him but Souen Teng didn't answer them. When Wen-ti (that is to say, Ssu-ma Tchao, the government leader at that time) heard about him, he sent Jouan Tsi to see.

The interview between Jouan Tsi and Souen Teng (if it really is he) is described in the *Che-chouo sin-yu* ("New conversations drawn from worldly gossip") and may be considered a typical interview between a superior sage and a neophyte, still incapable of freeing himself from fashionable philosophical or historical discussions. The anecdote begins with a sentence, the pertinence of which only becomes clear much later.

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Infantry (Colonel) Jouan's whistling was heard from several hundred paces

A True Man suddenly appeared in the Sou-men mountain (where Souen Teng lived north of Lo-yang) and the wood cutters all told stories about him. Jouan Tsi went to see. He found him squatting, his arms around his knees, at the edge of the precipice. Jouan Tsi scaled the mountain to draw close and then sat down, opposite him, his legs crossed (all this is very impolite and against ritual). Jouan Tsi then discussed and criticised all antiquity, from the most ancient times with respect to which he elucidated the solitary and Mysterious Way of the Yellow Emperor and Divine Farmer, up to the more recent period about which he devoted himself to a detailed examination of the excellences and flowering virtue of the Three Dynasties. When he questioned (the True Man) about all this, the latter remained motionless and did not respond. Jouan Tsi again returned to the attack, expounding the Active Doctrine, and the arts of perching the spirit (in the void) and of breath-control. He looked at (the True Man) to see what he thought about all that, but the latter remained as before: his frozen look had not budged.

Then Jouan Tsi emitted a long whistle which lasted for quite a while. Finally, (the True Man) said laughing: "Do it again!" Jouan Tsi began to whistle again and when he had had enough of it, he withdrew to a place halfway up the mountainside. There he heard a sound from on high like the cries of little children (?). It was like several choirs of flutes and drums, and the wooded valley resounded with its echo. When he turned around to discover where these sounds came from, Jouan Tsi saw that the man, whom he had just been with,

was simply in the mood for whistling.

This anecdote is connected with a long series of visits made by celebrated men-some legendary, some historic, as in this caseto hermit sages. There are examples from ancient times, in the text of Tchouang-tseu; in the Yu-lou of the Zen Buddhists of the Middle Ages, and in modern novels. And, as in this case, the theme of all these encounters is the negation of reason and all rational effort. Tchouang-tseu makes use of fables and dialectic to show the relativity of our rational knowledge, the Zen Buddhists make use of blows with a stick or eructations; here, an extra-rational whistling wins the sage's approbation when the most erudite and up-to-date discussions remain fruitless. Everything grotesque and supernatural pleases the Immortals, but whistling has further qualifications: it is produced by the breath, the spiritus, pneuma, âtman, which plays a great role in Taoist practice and which is able to produce musical sounds capable, according to Chinese theory, of regulating the universe. Jouan Tsi is out of breath: but the True Man shows him what a man unattached to any partial philosophy or any historical current can do: his whistling is the breath of nature itself which Wordsworth heard as "...among the solitary hills low

breathings..."

If one may take credence in the authenticity of this story, and I see no reason not to believe it—without, however, putting too much faith in the description of the orchestration of the buccal music of the Taoist saint—Jouan Tsi was in contact with a man who behaved, apart from his trips in space, like a Taoist hero. On the other hand, we know that he had experiences which must be, I think, adjudged "mystic." One reads in his *Biography* that

Jouan Tsi knew how to play the cithern very well. Just at the moment when he succeeded in doing what he wanted to do (in his music), he suddenly forgot his physical body. Many people in his time called him stupid; only his uncle (a famous writer) admired him and said that Jouan Tsi went way beyond him.

We have seen three facets of Jouan Tsi's interest in the Immortals: his Biography of Master Great Man, a literary and philosophical evocation; his meeting with a real Taoist hermit; and finally, his mystical tendencies which make him personally appreciate even the gambols of these beings. I would like to end by touching on a fourth facet of this interest—one of the most interesting, and one of the most difficult to clarify: did Jouan Tsi really believe that the Immortals existed, that they were men capable of making inter-stellar voyages such as he describes in his Biography of Master Great Man? Obviously, it is very difficult to enter into the mind of a man dead almost two millennia ago, to secure his answer to a question touching on a kind of religious faith; but his Intimate Poems, Yong-houai che, the most deeply-personal poetry of the epoch and perhaps of all Chinese literature, permit us to hope for a reply that will be subtle, without being committed to any definite stand.

Il must be said, first of all, that we know the very sharplydefined opinions of many of his contemporaries. For the most part, they are negative opinions—easy to give, easy to understand: it's always much simpler to say that one doesn't believe at all than to say that one believes. There were also some writers who strongly believed in the existence of the Immortals, but they did not analyse their thoughts in this regard as had Jouan Tsi. There was still another widely prevalent attitude at that time: the attitude of Hiang-Sieou in his commentary on the passage of the *Tchouang-tseu* which I have quoted above. For him, stories about Spirit-Men "were only allegories," and he explains them, saying that the sages,

those who went to the bottom of the truth and to the limits of what is marvelous (in the world), knew how to mystically unite themselves with what is beyond the Four Seas, although they were tranquilly and silently (seated) in their sleeping pavilion.

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This is a purely intellectual appreciation of these mystical voyages which we understand without trouble. Paul Claudel gives us a striking example of this point of view in his L'Esprit et l'eau (written in Peking in 1906), drawn from the second of his Cinq Grandes Odes:

Où que je tourne la tête
J'envisage l'immense octave de la Création!
Le monde s'ouvre et, si large qu'en soit l'empam,
mon regard le traverse d'un bout à l'autre.
...d'un bout du monde jusqu'à l'autre...
J'ai tendu l'immense rets de ma connaissance.

[Wherever I turn my head / I envisage the immense scale of Creation! / The world opens and, wide as its span may be, / my glance crosses it from one end to the other. / ...from one end of the world to the other... / I have spread out the immense net of my consciousness.]

Hiang-Sieou's explanation was part of a Confucianist and opportunistic philosophy which didn't please Jouan Tsi at all. In relegating the Immortals to a fictive and mental existence, the followers of this philosophy meant to free themselves from more involved questioning, in order to be able to take part in social life. This was a philosophy of compromise which could not satisfy a man like Jouan Tsi: if the *Biography of Master Great Man* is not sufficient proof of it, we have others much more trenchant. But if this compromise did not satisfy him, he did not go so far as to quite believe in the existence of the Immortals. His attitude is very complex; I can only indicate some aspects of

A Chinese Conception of the Hero

it. Here is a poem which seems to be the account of his conversion to the religion of the Taoist Immortals:

Many years ago when I was thirteen or fourteen years old
I loved and respected the Canonical Books of Poetry and History.
I dressed in coarse linen, but I kept the jewels of my Confucianist
virtue in my bosom.

Making myself emulate the wisest disciples of Confucius.
(But one day) I left the capital to enter into nature;
I climbed up on the heights to cast my thoughts afar.
Tombs covered the crests of the mountains
In which ten thousand generations shared a single moment (?).
After a thousand autumns, ten thousand years,
Where is all their glory and renown?

Then I understood the Immortal Sien-men-tseu And even now, sobbing, I laugh at my own expense!

The sight of the tombs containing the only remains of these heroes of his youth made Jouan Tsi understand that all their virtues and all their wisdom led but to death; the only permanent, and therefore worthy, path was that of Immortals like Sien-men-tseu. While recalling the Confucianist ardor of his youth, he mocks himself—but he mocks himself weeping, perhaps because he did not always feel very close to immortality.

Here is a second, rather characteristic poem:

There is a singular man living in a little city street Whose carriage is drawn by beautiful brown steeds. In the morning he rises from the fields of Ying Island; In the evening he lies down to rest in the luminous Rays. Twice in his flight like a winged being, He grazed the outside of the Four Seas!

I am going to put aside the affairs of this world: I will not allow them to rend my heart! And once departed I will nevermore return Except to look at them from afar after a thousand years.

Here again we find a certain ambiguity. The indication that the "singular man" lives in a little street leads one to think that he travels à la Claudel, envisaging the immense scale of creation from his armchair. But Jouan Tsi wishes to depart from the

world for a thousand years-isn't that an indication that he

aspired to immortality?

However it may be, in other poems we see that he doesn't manage to entirely believe in the existence of the Immortals. At the same time, these poems indicate that the quest for immortality and the Immortals was so important, as to create in Jouan Tsi a veritable sense of anguish. In a very curious poem, difficult to interpret, he contrasts Immortals like Master Great Man with searchers for immortality such as he saw about him, looking for herbs in the mountains. Here is the poem which I have abridged:

The Immortals put an end to the cultivation of their longevity: They feed their will in the void.
Flying between the clouds and the sun,
They keep far away from worldly roads.

(But) endlessly to go on gathering herbs Does not conform to the will of the divine Immortals. (This contradiction) has oppressed me and cast me into doubt And long since has made me hesitate:

The only path leading to the life of the Immortals was by way of long, tedious, dietetic and respiratory exercises: it was more or less necessary to lead the life of a hermit in the mountains and undergo all the discomforts which such a life involved. But the Immortals themselves—the Great Man is a good example—did not bother themselves with such matters. They lived far from the world in space, and Jouan Tsi is oppressed by the doubt which the difference between two modes of life inspires in him.

I will quote a second poem entirely on the same theme:

Formerly the divine Immortals
Lived on the slopes of mount Ye.
They climbed up to the clouds and led flying dragons;
They breathed in and breathed out and nibbled on jade flowers.
Hearing them spoken about and not being able to see them
Makes me moan and sigh with grief.
I suffer because I am not like them,
Which adds still more to my sadness
"I study down here to rise up to the heights",
But I spin around in a ring; I don't know where I go!

The phrase "I study down here to rise up to the heights" is from Confucius, and Jouan Tsi employs it in an ambiguous ironical fashion. Confucius (Louen-yu, XIV, 37) undoubtedly meant that he was devoting himself to the study of the details of our daily life in order to achieve knowledge of general principles, knowledge of the Mandate of Heaven, as the commentators called it. But the context here obliges us to understand that Jouan Tsi was following these studies in a very down-to-earth fashion, gathering herbs, etc.,—and thus he hopes to attain the height of the Immortals. He still remains, as in his first poem, hesitant

and anguished: he lacks Taoist faith!

This ambivalence which Jouan Tsi shows with regard to the Immortals is typical of his entire life. He never could commit himself either to the pursuit of the Long Life, nor to the politics of his time. To tell the truth, he is a figure of historical transition. in a pure state. Dissatisfied with the Confucianism of his time —the philosophy of antiquity, the social and political philosophy—, he turned toward Taoism and the quest for immortality —a medieval philosophy, a personal and religious philosophy. But neither one nor the other seemed to satisfy him. Chinese historians have revealed this discord to us in a brief anecdote. In it we see Jouan Tsi driving his carriage up to the point where the wheel-marks die away on the highway, at the very edge of solitary nature. There he stopped and wept without restraint, and then returned to the society of man. This anecdote is like a symbolic résumé both of his life and his time: China was turning its back on its ancient past, where politics and society, the outward world, remained supreme values; and it was moving toward an interior world symbolized by nature. For it was in nature and, above all, in the mountains, that the Chinese searched for the Immortals.

With all his hesitations, with all his doubting, Jouan Tsi seems sure only of one thing: he had a profound and anguishing need for freedom, or, if you wish, for the Absolute: for some permanence in which he could fully realize himself in all his grandeur as a living man. Master Great Man shows us Jouan Tsi as he fulfills himself in dream, in his literary imagination, as an absolutely free being, as grand as the universe. But his poems reveal to us that he was dubious of truly achieving his

Taoist dreams. In other poems which are like an impossible harmonization of his contradictory desires, he describes himself as a warrior hero whose

Long sword leans on the outside of Heaven; (A warrior who) grasps mount T'ai like a stone to be pointed And the Yellow River as the girdle for his robe.

His hero earns eternal glory when he falls in some great battle. He is a good Confucianist hero, therefore, because he sacrifices himself for his country—and, by the same token, he is a bad Taoist. Perhaps it is to his very failure of self-fulfillment that we owe the story of Jouan Tsi's dreams and illusions. It is a magnificent story which singularly helps us to plunge ourselves into the heroic and very Chinese world of the Taoist Immortals.

ECONOMICS, IDEOLOGY

AND AMERICAN POLITICS 1

The ideal, my friend, is the lifebuoy. Let's say one is taking a swim, floundering around, trying as hard as possible not to sink. One might try to swim in a safe direction despite contrary currents; the essential thing is to use a classic stroke according to recognized swimming principles...Some eccentrics who try to swim faster in order to get there, come what may, splash all over everybody and always end by drowning, involving I don't know how many other poor souls who might have been able to continue splashing around tranquilly enough—in the soup. (Jean Anouilh)

To the casual observer and professional analyst, to the intellectual both here and abroad, American politics have frequently appeared as an amalgam of confusion, frustration and irrationality. The political parties have seemed devoid of cohesion and

¹ This article is adapted from a lecture presented to the Seminar of the Fondation Européenne de la Culture in Copenhagen, October 14, 1960.

unity, and innocent of a coherent political philosophy. Long ago, for example, Lord Bryce observed that our major parties have nothing to say on vital issues; that "neither party has any cleancut principles, any distinctive tenets. Both have traditions. Both claim to have tendencies. Both have certainly war cries, organizations, interests enlisted in their support. But those interests are, in the main, the interests of getting, or keeping, the patronage of the government. Distinctive tenets and policies, points of political doctrine and points of political practice, have all but vanished. They have not been thrown away, but they have been stripped away by Time and the progress of events, fulfilling some policies, blotting out others. All has been lost except office or the hope of it."²

Half a century later, Harold Laski echoed these sentiments. "No one seriously supposes," he wrote, "that either the Republicans or the Democrats have a clear and coherent political philosophy. Their platforms, as formulated at the presidential conventions, are little more than a cri de cœur of quite temporary significance, in which the attack upon their opponents is far more genuine than their promises of measures which will accompany their victory." When promises are evaluated in terms of performance, he felt, "it is difficult to argue that a presidential election in America is, with all its excitement, very different from a choice by the voters between the two wings of a single conservative party. The emphasis may differ at times; but that is the reality of the choice."

In our own day, a distinguished journalist and editor voices similar concern. While he admits the need for areas of compromise in a political system, James Wechsler decries the tendency to make compromise almost an end in itself. The result, he says, "is not 'compromise' but stalemate, not the achievement of the possible but the enthronement of the status quo, not moderation but immobility, not the clear delineation of public issues but a spreading sense that there are no longer any important public

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² James Bryce, The American Commonwealth, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1917 (New Edition), volume II, p. 21.

³ Harold J. Laski, The American Democracy, New York, The Viking Press, 1948, pp. 129, 130.

questions on which men may reasonably be asked to give more than equivocal answers." Looking at the American scene, he concludes that "There is no shortage of great themes for political combat, but rather a loss of nerve among most of our political warriors. It is time for a new beginning."

There is more than a germ of truth in these generalizations. American political parties are not and never have been the ideal parties of Burke's imagination. They do not conform to the classical pattern adumbrated in political science texts. They are not composed of monolithic elements, dedicated to the same principles of government and united to put these principles into effect through legislation and administration. Instead, they are a conglomeration of diverse interests-brokers of conflicting pressures-mediators between divergent economic, social, religious, and philosophical tendencies. They are non-revolutionary. non-ideological, non-theoretical, non-Utopian, non-systematic, Their objectives are limited and their methods pragmatic. They are committed to gradualism, meliorism, and experimentalism. They have endowed American politics with characteristics which the political theorist finds frustrating and disturbing—difficult to understand and even more difficult to admire.

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Most puzzling, perhaps, especially to Europeans, is the relative un-importance of radical thought and action in American politics. Never did there develop a viable Socialist party, patterned after the British or Australian model. Marxism, either as an economic doctrine or a political movement, never attracted more than a pitiful band of extremists.⁵ The major parties, despite their differences on particular issues at particular times, seldom divided along simple economic class lines. The underdogs in American society never successfully launched a militant, class-conscious movement to capture political power and thus promote

⁴ James A. Wechsler, "The Liberal Retreat and the Need for Political Realignment," *The Progressive*, May 1960, p. 20.

⁵ According to Supreme Court, Justice William O. Douglas, for example, the American Communists "are miserable merchants of unwanted ideas; their wares remain unsold." They are "the best known, the most beset, and the least thriving of any fifth column in history." Dissenting opinion in *Dennis* versus *United States*, 341 U.S. 494 (1951).

their economic self-interest. Paradoxically enough, the most advanced industrial nation in the world also has the politically most docile "proletariat."

The first, and most obvious, explanation lies in the very structure of the American government—a federal system, based on a written constitution, with a strict separation of powers between the national and state governments, and a tri-partite division of responsibility between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The system reflects a deep-seated fear of the omnipotent state. It represents an effort to design a governmental structure which "would check interest with interest, class with class, faction with faction, and one branch of government with another in a harmonious system of mutual frustration."6 With its premium on decentralized power, it tends to promote sectionalism, division of authority, and conflict—a Hobbesian bellum omnium contra omnes. It is so concerned with safeguards against political absolutism, so intent on providing a complex system of checks and balances, that it almost precludes the operation of government as a unified and positive force. And this, as Henry Steele Commager observes, was precisely the intent of the Founding Fathers. They "not only made it difficult for government to invade fields denied to it, but they made it difficult for government to operate at all. They created a system where deadlock would be the normal character of the American government..."7

In this framework, the political parties are the only instrument for overcoming deadlock and harmonizing the relations between distinct and independent governmental units. Though unable to cope with the constitutional checks imposed by the judiciary, the parties can at least coordinate the operations of

⁶ Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1951, p. 9.

⁷ Henry Steele Commager, Majority Rule and Minority Rights, New York, Oxford University Press, 1943, p. 7; quoted in D. W. Brogan, Politics in America, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1954, p. 91.

the President, the Senate, and the House of Representatives, each with its own inalienable powers. But, as D. W. Brogan rightly points out, the parties can perform this function only at the expense of their role as "unified," "consistent," and "responsible" organizations. Frequently, they can perform their difficult task only by resolving "not to let the best be the enemy of the good or even of the barely tolerable." Circumscribed by the framework in which they must operate, the parties have little alternative to becoming brokers for diverse and conflicting interests—shifting coalitions of economic, sectional, racial, and religious groups tenuously held together by compromise and moderation.

It is not insignificant that American political history is littered with the corpses of parties which have tried to stand for something "meaningful," and resisted the logic of compromise inherent in our governmental framework. For the most part, such parties never had much chance of national success, and generally withered within an election or two after their birth. The Anti-Masonic party, the Free Soil Party, the Know-Nothing party; the Greenback, Prohibition, and Populist parties; and the Progressives of 1912, 1924, and 1948, are all silent testimonial to the impossibility of organizing political activity around a single issue or a narrow base of interests. Horace Greeley, the great anti-slavery crusader, recognized the weakness of any party which lacks the support of a coalition of interests. "I want to succeed this time," he said ruefully in 1860, "yet I know the country is not Anti-Slavery. It will only swallow a little Anti-Slavery in a great deal of sweetening. An Anti-Slavery man per se cannot be elected, but a Tariff, River-and-Harbor, Pacific Railroad, Free-Homestead man, may succeed although he is Anti-Slavery...I mean to have as good a candidate as the majority will elect. And, if the People are to rule, I think that is the way."9

The point is well taken. In the United States, it seems, a third party can do little more than modify and leaven the

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⁸ Brogan, op. cit., p. 91.

⁹ Quoted in Brogan, op. cit., p. 53. For a definitive and fascinating study of American third-party movements since the Civil War, see Russell B. Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics, East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 1951.

programs of its major rivals. It can force the major parties "to take account of issues they were seeking to evade,"10 but it has no real chance of achieving power in its own right. The fatal weakness of a third party—aside from the procedural obstacles built into the election laws of 50 different states—is its incompatibility with the pluralism of American society. Its cohesiveness and ideological consistency are the very cause of its undoing. If it appeals to a particular economic group or class, it is courting almost certain defeat, because "no distinguishable group, no segment of the population possessing common economic interests, is big enough to be, or has prospect of becoming, the 'majority' in our complex society."11 It is a fact of American political life that social, ethnic, and sectional interests cut across economic group lines, and often make for strange political bedfellows. Under the circumstances, a single-issue, single-interest party is beaten almost from the start.

This points up at least two consequences of the federalistpluralist syndrome. First, there is a tendency for economic conflicts to be diverted from the political arena to the market place. Since no one economic bloc is likely to capture control of a tri-partite government, the political game hardly seems worth the effort—especially if the market offers more attractive alternatives. That is why the American worker (at least since the 1880's) generally sought higher wages and better conditions through collective bargaining rather than militant political action. He pursued his economic goals, not through a classconscious labor party, but through a pragmatic, jobconscious trade unionism—dedicated to making each day "a better day than the one that had gone before." The businessman, especially during the 19th century, had no time to dabble in politics. He was tempted far more by the unrivalled opportunities of a burgeoning industrialism. The farmer, particularly before the Civil War, was more intrigued with free land in the West than the prospect of controlling a weak and negative state. In a po-

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¹⁰ Laski, op. cit., p. 81.

Dewey Anderson and Percy E. Davidson, Ballots and the Democratic Class Struggle, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1943, pp. 255-57; quoted in Brogan, op. cit., p. 73.

litical system honeycombed with checks and balances; in a system where government is cast in the role of "neutral" and "arbiter"—enforcing the ground rules, but not participating in the decision making process—political control seems too costly to attain and too unremunerative to be worth the investment.

The second consequence of federalism and pluralism is to "internalize" economic conflicts—to make them a matter of intraparty rather than inter-party competition. Any group, intent on using political means for economic ends, is almost compelled to join with other groups, economic and non-economic, if it hopes to succeed politically. Working within a major party, it has to exert organized pressure—to bargain, trade, and compromise with other groups in a context of orderly "log-rolling." It has to accept the philosophy that "half a loaf is better than none." If it commands a sizable bloc of votes or impressive financial resources, it can play off one party against another and, perhaps, obtain special concessions and commitments. But, above all, it must recognize the importance of "team play;" it must submit

to the give-and-take of political compromise.

The implications are clear. Since both major parties are an amalgam of diverse pressure groups; since both represent an accomodation of conflicting interests—they must, of necessity, become conglomerate organizations, lacking ideological consistency and programatic coherence. Moreover, since both parties must offer a product that is saleable in the political market place, inter-party differences tend to be narrowed and to become blurred. There is the same tendency for minimum product differentiation which economists have observed in the automobile market. Product differences are played up and exaggerated in noisy advertising campaigns, but the real differences are held to a minimum. The risk of losing a significant segment of the clientele is too great to allow for major discrepancies. Finally, when one producer does innovate, the others must quickly follow suit. The gap must be closed by imitation and adaptation. No living organism—be it an automobile firm or a political party—can afford to be left behind in the competitive race by continuing to offer wares for which there is no longer an effective demand. As game theory tells us, mini-max may be the key to survival.

Another set of factors explaining the moderation, compromise, and lack of class-consciousness in American politics is rooted in the tradition of individualism, the belief in vertical mobility, and the acceptance of a pragmatic *Weltanschauung*. In colonial America, individualism meant—in the negative sense—a distrust of government. To the early settlers, the state was an instrument of privilege, a creator of monopolies, an oppressor of individual liberties. As Europeans, many had suffered religious persecution administered by intolerant governments; as colonists, they experienced the discriminations and restrictions of a mercantile regime; as free men they found it easy to believe, with Jefferson, that the government which governs least governs best.

On the positive side, individualism meant a belief in the worth and self-sufficiency of the individual. It was expressed in Benjamin Franklin's "Poor Richard" tradition of self-help and personal endeavor—"the Canal Boy to President, Log Cabin to White House, Bobbin Boy to Steel King myth" which even now has an almost "unshakable grip on the American imagination." It was expressed in the tales of Horatio Alger, the self-made man who rose "from rags to riches by pluck, not luck." It was articulated in the Emersonian doctrine of self-reliance which made every man responsible for his own salvation. Individualism was nothing more than a Yankee-Calvinist-Enlightenment belief that the individual must take charge of his own moral, political, and economic well-being.¹²

This syndrome of individualist beliefs was reinforced by a faith in vertical mobility—the feeling that a man could rise on the economic ladder through his own efforts, the conviction that "the world is up for grabs." The American, as Harold Laski conceded, "is rarely interested in his past because he is so certain that his future will bear no relation to it. The tradition that he has inherited is that of a dynamic civilization in which he is assured that whatever was yesterday, it will be different again tomorrow. He assumes as part of his inheritance that he will have

¹² Russell B. Nye, "Marx, the Nineties, and the American Myth," Mercurio (Rome), 1961. See also Irvin G. Wyllie, The Self-Made Man in America, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1954.

the right continually to go forward. He does not accept the postulates of a society where, as in the Europe from which he largely came, birth or inherited wealth may make all the difference to the hopes he may venture to form." The American may be poor; he does not expect to remain poor. He may be unemployed; he expects to find a job in the near future. He may be a half-literate immigrant; he expects that his children will some day attend the university. If Napoleon's soldier believed that he carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack, so the American schoolboy believes that he has as good a chance as anyone else to become president of the United States or (preferably) president of General Motors.

This faith (or myth, if you prefer) has shown a remarkable survival value. Despite our concern over increasing social stratification and the shrinkage of opportunities, despite the organizational revolution of the 20th century and the progressive collectivization of economic activity, the individualist credo has retained a pervasive hold on the American mind. The notion is still widespread that professional skill, hard work, and constant efforts at self-improvement are at least as significant as family origin, political "pull," or the "old school tie" in landing a good job. Though we constantly joke about it, Americans implicitly assume that the hierarchical ordering of individuals somehow reflects merit based on performance—that anybody has a chance to rise if "he works at it hard enough." And, in large measure, experience has validated that belief. Given the spectacular growth of industry, the phenomenal dynamism of the American economy, and a historic shortage of labor, the Jeffersonian-Jacksonian ideal of the self-made man able to rise in accordance with his ability is more than a cultural illusion. In business, especially, it is true that "management is a profession or vocation which many people, including workers and union leaders, aspire to enter" rather than "a class into which only the select few ever have access." Vertical mobility, therefore, is sufficiently part of a common experience to make it a viable economic tradition.14

¹³ Laski, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁴ The European and American attitudes toward vertical mobility are com-

Whatever its objective validity, however, this optimistic belief continues to have a pervasive influence on politics. It serves to immunize the American mind against an incipient class consciousness, and makes the economic underdog reluctant to embrace the ideology of class conflict. It makes him loath to identify with programs aimed at overthrowing the system in which he feels he has a stake. If some day, he (or his children) will own property, why attack property as an institution? If he can expect to improve his share of the national income, why change the machinery for its distribution? As long as economic opportunity is more fact than fiction; as long as classes are not rigid castes; as long as membership in the economic élite is based on performance, not status—why tamper with the institutional framework? Why follow Marx rather than Darwin, Laski rather than Franklin?¹⁵

One final factor is noteworthy, viz. the traditional American preference for the immediate and practical over the Utopian and theoretical. Beginning with the Revolutionary War which itself was "a massive piece of ad hoc improvisation for operative ends," successful political movements have followed a pragmatic and empirical course—rejecting absolutes in favor of concrete solutions which would work in particular situations. The American approach, writes Father Bruckberger, a French Dominican retracing the path of Crevecœur and Tocqueville, is unique in "its absolute, its unconditional, its stubborn preference for men, for concrete men of flesh and blood, as against any political system whatever, no matter how theoretically perfect." It refuses

pared in Walter Adams and John A. Garraty, Is the World our Campus? East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 1960, pp. 144-145.

¹⁵ The former leader of the American Communist Party complained that it was extremely difficult to "free the minds of the workers from the many Jeffersonian, bourgeois, agrarian illusions which persisted with particular stubbornness among them." William Z. Foster, History of the Communist Party, New York, International Publishers, 1952, p. 25.

¹⁶ Nye, "Marx, the Nineties, and the American Myth," cit.

¹⁷ R. L. Bruckberger, *Image of America*, New York, Viking Press, 1959, p. 73.

to sacrifice man to ideological abstractions and recognizes "that in human affairs the all-or-nothing is always a false solution."

This pragmatic attitude is reflected most dramatically, perhaps, in the American labor movement which has shown little affinity for doctrine and ideology, and has generally built its programs "upon facts and not theories." As far back as 1883, when asked by a Congressional Committee about trade union objectives, Adolf Strasser, a leader in the movement, replied: "We have no ultimate ends. We are going on from day to day. We are fighting only for immediate objects—objects that can be realized in a few years...We are all practical men."18 Asked the same question in 1914, Samuel Gompers, the first president of the American Federation of Labor, explained that the movement "works along the lines of least resistance and endeavors to accomplish the best results in improving the conditions of the working people, men, women, and children, today and tomorrow, and each day making it a better day than the one that had gone before..."

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Like virtually all American labor leaders, Gompers felt that Socialism had little to offer. "The intelligent, common-sense workmen," he said, "prefer to deal with the problems of today, the problems with which they are bound to contend if they want to advance, rather than to deal with a picture and a dream which have never had, and I am sure never will have, any reality in the actual affairs of humanity..." True to the pragmatic tradition, Gompers rejected the socialist blue print as too theoretical, too impractical, and too long-range. He categorically refused to lead the trade union movement to a political Armageddon. While he favored the idea of labor in politics—if this were restricted to "rewarding our friends and punishing our enemies"—he steadfastly refused to be pressured into a new political party which would give expression to a doctrinal trade unionism. To Gom-

¹⁸ Reprinted in E. Wight Bakke and Clark Kerr, Unions, Management and the Public, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1948, pp. 31-32. For a classic account of America's emphasis on "job-conscious" as opposed to "class-conscious" unionism, see Selig Perlman, History of Trade-Unionism in the United States, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1923.

¹⁹ Reprinted in Bakke and Kerr, op. cit., p. 32.

pers, who understood the American system and felt the American mood, it was one thing to enter politics as a pragmatic opportunist; it was quite another to form an ideological, class-

conscious workers' party.

This pragmatic attitude was by no means confined to trade unionism. It characterized virtually every American reform movement. To be sure, there were some progressives and radicals who took refuge in theoretical consistency, "making orthodoxy more important than results, and thereby contributing more than ever to the detachment from reality from which they already suffered;" but the vast majority remained in the pragmatic fold, unperturbed by doctrinal inconsistency and jealous of their right to select the useful parts of "mutually exclusive systems." Typically, the American reformer, like Americans generally, had a faith in facts, in discoveries based on observation and experience. He distrusted Utopian models springing from the mind of armchair theorists. His object was to reform, not transform the world—to make better what is not altogether bad rather than to start from scratch. And, strangely enough, this approach has produced results. So far, at least, it has worked.

It has been said that, according to the laws of aerodynamics, the bumble bee should not be able to fly. Yet it flies. It has been argued that the American political system is an anatomical and physiological monstrosity which cannot possibly work. Yet it works. "How," the student of politics may ask, "can there be progress without a theory to point the way?" "How can there be reform without a tabula rasa?" "How can there be meaningful competition between parties with remarkably similar ideologies?" "How can issues be articulated in an atmosphere of political compromise, moderation, and harmony?" Yet, as the record indicates, there can be progress without theory, reform without a tabula rasa, and political conflict without ideology. And the New Deal is a dramatic case in point.

Almost from the beginning, the New Deal was beset by

²⁰ Nye, "Marx, the Nineties, and the American Myth", cit.

dogma and doctrine, both on the Lef and the Right. The extremists denied the possibility of following a middle way between complete socialization, on the one hand, and a laissez-faire economy, on the other. With the fiercest intransigence, they rejected the notion of a middle way—a "mixed economy." While the radicals equated the maintenance of capitalism with betrayal and fascism, the reactionaries warned that there is really no "half-way between Wall Street and Moscow."

Ogden Mills, Secretary of the Treasury in the Hoover Administration, expressed the conservative sentiment: "We can have a free country or a socialistic one. We cannot have both. Our economic system cannot be half free and half socialistic... There is no middle ground between governing and being governed, between absolute sovereignty and liberty, between tyranny and freedom." Said President Hoover: "Even partial regimentation cannot be made to work and still maintain live democratic institutions."21 Specific New Deal measures were attacked as violations of the conventional dogma—the eternal verities of classical economics, the letter and spirit of the Constitution. Public Works? This could lead only to increased expenditures, unbalanced budgets, a growing national debt and, eventually, to financial disaster. Like an individual, the nation must always live within its means. Social Security? Such interference with individual freedom would undermine personal initiative, weaken the nation's moral fiber, and make everyone a slave to the state. Minimum Wage Legislation? Such obstruction of natural and automatic market forces would result in unemployment—displacing workers whose marginal productivity did not equal the stipulated minimum wage. Public Housing? This was a private and local matter in which federal intervention is prohibited by the Constitution. If there is a demand for housing, private enterprise will fill the need. And so on, ad infinitum. According to the conservative catechism, a free society had no obligation to combat depressions or to provide for the welfare of its citizens.

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²¹ Quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., "Sources of the New Deal," Columbia University Forum, Fall 1959, p. 8. Whatever one may think of Professor Schlesinger's major thesis—"that there would very likey have been some sort of New Deal in the Thirties even without the Depression"—this is an excellent vignette on the temper of an era.

The radicals on the Left were equally doctrinaire and dogmatic. While their policy conclusions were naturally quite different, they shared with the conservatives the "either/or" assessment of the New Deal experiment. Putting the case with the starkest simplicity, The New Republic stated: "Either the nation must put up with the confusions and miseries of an essentially unregulated capitalism, or it must prepare to supersede capitalism with socialism. There is no longer a feasible middle ground."22 And when Roosevelt refused to accept this Hobson's choice, he was roundly criticized for lacking doctrine and direction. The New Deal, cried Norman Thomas in a radio address, was certainly not socialism. Far from it. "Roosevelt had not carried out the Socialist platform—except on a stretcher." Listing each of the New Deal reforms in turn. Thomas observed that the banking system was rehabilitated and then turned back to the bankers. Holding company legislation provided—not for nationalization but for dissolution of the far-flung utility empires. Social security was nothing but a weak imitation of a real program. The NRA was little more than a scheme of industry self-regulation, designed to maintain private profits. The AAA was but a capitalist scheme to subsidize scarcity in agriculture. The TVA was merely an adventure in state capitalism, and the CCC an experiment with forced labor. None of the New Deal measures, with the possible exception of TVA, could be construed as a step toward the socialization of the means of production.23

Roosevelt, the pragmatist par excellence, was not perturbed by these attacks. Stubbornly he stuck to his course of rational experiment of trial and error. When businessmen chanted the "account-book liturgy," he told them that "a balanced budget isn't putting people to work. I will balance the budget as soon as I take care of the unemployed." When they complained that the New Deal violated the principles of free enterprise, he reminded them of the depression—noting that the country was "faced with a condition and not a theory." Always he ended with the plea:

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²² Quoted ibid., p. 11.

²³ James McGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1956, p. 242.

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"I wish you would give me a solution." When the radicals pictured him as the "gay reformer" lacking doctrine and direction; when Heywood Broun branded him as "Labor's Public Enemy no. 1," Roosevelt could only stand on his Oglethorpe University address: "The country needs...bold, persistent experimentation," he had said. "It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something." ²⁵

Roosevelt, an eminently "practical" man, refused to be entrapped by rigid ideology. He had no master plan for saving the country. A "tinkerer" and "gadget" man, his foremost interest was to find immediate solutions for specific and pressing problems. "What excited Roosevelt," writes one of his biographers, "was not grand economic and political theory but concrete achievements that people could touch and see and use."26 To the extent that Roosevelt had a political philosophy (in the ideological sense), it was summed up in this statement during the 1932 campaign: "Say that civilization is a tree which, as it grows, continually produces rot and dead wood. The radical says: 'Cut it down.' The conservative says: 'Don't touch it.' The liberal compromises: 'Let's prune, so that we lose neither the old trunk nor the new branches."27 And Roosevelt chose the "liberal" way. Intent on "avoiding alike the revolution of radicalism and the revolution of conservatism," he constantly repeated the Macaulay dictum

No one, perhaps, understood the significance of the New Deal's pragmatic, non-ideological approach better than John Maynard Keynes, himself a critic of absolutes. In an open letter, he commended Roosevelt for seeking "to mend the evils of our condition by reasoned experiment within the framework of the

that to reform was to preserve.

²⁴ Burns, op. cit., pp. 245, 246.

²⁵ Address at Oglethorpe University, May 22, 1932; reprinted in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, New York, Random House, 1938, volume I, p. 646.

²⁶ Burns, op. cit., pp. 245, 246.

²⁷ Quoted in Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 12.

existing social system. "If you fail," said Keynes, "rational choice will be gravely prejudiced throughout the world, leaving orthodoxy and revolution to fight it out. But, if you succeed, new and bolder methods will be tried everywhere, and we may date the first chapter of a new economic era from your accession to office." ²⁸

Roosevelt, of course, did succeed and the New Deal did signal the start of a "new economic era." Its triumph rested not only on the adoption of comprehensive economic reforms and a revolutionary change in the government's role in economic life. Most important was the solid political fact that, after the New Deal had run its course, no party—whatever its ideological preferences and whatever its "class" commitments—could afford to turn the clock back. Whereas, prior to 1932, an administration in power could still make a primitive choice between being Keynesian or non-Keynesian, for the "welfare state" or against it, thereafter that choice was no longer a realistic possibility. For, choosing the non-Keynesian, "anti-welfare-state" position became synonymous with political suicide, and Herbert Hoover was probably the last president who was willing and able "to exercise the choice in favor of suicide."29 Since then, the Republican party has had to imitate and adapt in order to survive. It has been unable to afford the luxury of its pre-Roosevelt orthodoxy. Today, though Republican hearts may still thrill to the McKinley liturgy, though the Roosevelt image may still be a favorite hate symbol, the desire to hold office is stronger than the ideological drive for self-immolation. Whatever the die-hards may say in the privacy of board rooms and banking houses, the Grand Old Party's actions can no longer live up to its old dogmas. In deed, if not in words, both the "modern" and antediluvian wings of the party must admit—however grudgingly—that compromise on economic issues represents "common sense rather than...historical betrayal."30

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²⁸ Quoted ibid., p. 12.

²⁹ John K. Galbraith, *Economics and the Art of Controversy*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1955, pp. 100-01.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 105.

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Two illustrations, both cited by John Kenneth Galbraith. should suffice to make the point. In the field of fiscal policy, the traditional Republican faith was in "automaticity"—a belief in the inherent regenerative powers of a free enterprise system. Prosperity and depression, so the argument went, are normal concomitants of economic activity. Just as nature has its own rhythm; just as seasons come and go; just as tides rise and fall, so a succession of good and bad times is inevitable. If depression strikes, the only thing to do is to let the disease run its course—to give the blood enough time to expel the impurities. As long as the basic organism is healthy, the free movement of prices, wages. and interest rates, the unfettered decisions of business men and the unobstructed mobility of labor, will soon restore a state of equilibrium. No attempt at outside manipulation, no effort at artificial respiration, can hasten recovery or improve the level of economic welfare.

This was an integral part of Republican campaign oratory at least until eight years ago. "Until then," as Galbraith observes, "it was possible for many to suggest and for some to suppose that the notion of economic management was an evil invention of the Democratic party or that it was a mask for the power aspirations of political meddlers." But this is no longer the case. When, in the face of the 1954 recession, Mr. Eisenhower agreed that government has a responsibility to maintain economic stability, the debate over "automaticity" was abruptly terminated. The government, he conceded, "must be prepared to take preventive as well as remedial action" to cope with new situations. "Government must use its vast power to help maintain employment and purchasing power as well as to maintain reasonably stable prices." This, he added, "is not a start-and-stop responsibility, but a continuous one," and he promised to use all weapons at his disposal to deal with a developing crisis—including credit controls, debt management, budget flexibility, agricultural price supports, tax policy, and public works expenditures.32 Thus, the

¹¹ Ibid., p. 59.

³² Economic Report of the President, January 28, 1954, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954.

need for periodic government intervention was settled as a serious political issue. While controversy may continue as to the methods, vigor, and timing of such intervention, the fundamental New Deal principle of contra-cyclical fiscal policy can no longer be contested. The noise of battle may linger, but the battle itself seems to be over.³³

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The same is true of the controversy over the "welfare" state. Here, too, there is a wide gulf between political oratory and political action, between words and deeds. As late as 1952, the Republican presidential nominee could still invoke the traditional invective against creeping socialism, New Deal paternalism, and Fair Deal statism. Candidate Eisenhower, speaking at Boise, Idaho. could warn that statism had reached the point where the "government does everything but come in and wash the dishes for the housewife."34 Lampooning a government pamphlet on the art of dishwashing, he could condemn the excessive zeal of bureaucratic meddlers. But, after eight years in office, President Eisenhower could no longer speak with sarcastic indignation. He could not point to the repeal of a single important welfare measure, nor even the discontinuance of the infamous pamphlet. The latter, it seems, has been reprinted several times since he assumed office. Though he once implied that ultimate security could be had only in prison, the President has approved the increase of social security benefits, and the extension of coverage to an estimated 6,000,000 people. He has signed into law an increase in the minimum wage from 75 cents to \$1.00 per hour, and has proposed an additional boost of 15 cents. (The Democrats have demanded no more than a 25-cent hourly increase.) Even on

³³ The principle at issue was formally written into law in the Employment Act of 1946: "The Congress hereby declares that it is the continuing policy and responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practicable means...to coordinate and utilize all its plans, functions, and resources for the purpose of creating and maintaining, in a manner calculated to foster and promote free competitive enterprise and the general welfare, conditions under which there will be afforded useful employment opportunities, including self-employment, for those able, willing, and seeking to work, and to promote maximum employment, production, and purchasing power." Public Law 304, 79th Congress, 2d Session, 1946; emphasis added.

³⁴ Quoted in Galbraith, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

the knotty question of medical care for the aged, President Eisenhower has claimed to differ with the opposition only on "methods," not on "goals." In short, the welfare state—despite disclaimers on the Right—is no longer an "either/or" issue in American politics. America, as Galbraith wryly suggests, is not

a welfare state in principle, only in practice.

This readiness of the Right to foresake ideology—this opportunistic adjustment to economic reality—has had at least two related consequences. On the one hand, it was a factor in forestalling the cataclysmic upheavals prophesized in the Marxian dialectic; on the other, it contributed significantly to a deradicalization of the American Left. Familiar with the rapacious industrialism of the 19th century. Marx foresaw a continual concentration of income and wealth, an increase in proletarian misery, and a capitalist state unwilling to ameliorate the plight of the masses. He assumed, not altogether without justification that the ruling class would act as "a committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie,"35 and that it would resort to violence rather than surrender its prerogatives. Yet, in America (and some countries of Western Europe) this prophecy has not been borne out by events. The "economic royalists" have tried to retain their political influence, not through violence, but by meeting the exigencies of the political market place. They have tried to retain the basic framework of capitalism by accepting (however grudgingly) the principle of reform and by compromising with the economic demands of the masses. Despite their orthodox and doctrinaire predilections, they have swung to the Left and, in so doing, deradicalized the Left.36

Of course, the outstanding example of the deradicalized Left is, as we have already suggested, the American trade union. Functioning pragmatically within the capitalist framework, it

³⁵ The Communist Manifesto. For an interesting comment on the class struggle and its relevance to America, see Marx's Letter to Weydemeyer, London, March 5, 1852.

³⁶ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Vital Center*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949; Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1953; Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1960.

is as indigenous a part of the "establishment" as the corporation itself. And, to the extent that it has obtained for the rank-and-file such benefits as higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions; to the extent that it has been an instrument for assuring the worker of a fair share in the increased productivity of an affluent capitalism, the trade union has given the worker a stake in the system and prevented his alienation from it. The non-revolutionary mood of the American working class reflects, therefore, the simple fact that its members are generally satisfied with their lot and feel they can improve it by gradualist and peaceful means. They are not the wage slaves of the Marxian model—constantly ground down by subsistence wages and compelled to produce surplus value for their capitalist exploiters. In spite of notable exceptions, the typical American worker, at least today, is above all a complacent bourgeois. He lives in his own home-complete with central heating, refrigerator, cooking range, washing machine, and television. While the house is heavily mortgaged and the appliances purchased on the installment plan, the worker has a strong sense of ownership and the proud feeling that he, too, belongs to the propertied class. His chrome-laden automobile, his college-bred children, his participation in civic affairs are further symbols of his bourgeois status. So strong is his identification with the middle class that he does not find it either inconsistent or paradoxical to vote, occasionally at least, for the more conservative political party. In short, the worker of today does not conform to the stereotype of alienation. If anyone in America feels alienated, it is those intellectuals who regret that there are no more ideological worlds to conquer.

This deradicalization of the Left, like the moderation of extremism on the Right, was due largely to the success of the New Deal. It was the New Deal which demonstrated the feasibility of combatting depressions, promoting the redistribution of income, and enacting welfare legislation—without a tabula rasa, without an annihilation of the old order. By showing that a policy of reform was both workable and adequate, the New Deal underscored the virtues of gradualism and meliorism, and indicated that progress does not depend on a total transformation of the capitalist machinery. This blow against doctrinaire purism

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was reinforced by a growing disillusionment with the "classless Utopia." After World War II, the American radical began to realize that the Soviet experiment had not resulted in the abolition of a class-based society—that the old ruling clique was simply replaced by, what Diilas calls, a "new class" of managerial bureaucrats who control the workers, the peasants, the masses. As Schlesinger points out, "the Soviet experience has proved, if it has proved anything, that concentration of power creates classes whatever the system of ownership—classes under communism as well as under capitalism."38 It has exposed the capacity of the single-party, all-powerful state for despotism and oppression. It has tended to bring the radical back into the historic tradition of liberalism—"to a belief in the integrity of the individual, in the limited state, in due process of law, in empiricism and gradualism."39 The force of circumstance has shaken the radical's ancient dogmas, his faith in the transcendant beneficence of the "ideal" state. Respect for the facts has forced him to conclude that "man, being neither perfect morally nor perfect intellectually, cannot be trusted to use absolute power, public or private, with either virtue or wisdom."40 Both the New Deal's success and a better understanding of totalitarianism have pushed the radical back toward the "vital center."

Summarizing, then, it is not unfair to say (with Lord Bryce) that in American politics "all has been lost except office or the hope of it." It is possible to conclude (with Friedrich Engels) that Americans are "frightfully dense theoretically" and "almost wholly matter-of-fact" in their political thinking. Hou it is also,

³⁷ Milovan Djilas, The New Class, New York, Praeger, 1957.

³⁸ The Vital Center, p. 150.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 156.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 169.

⁴¹ Quoted in Nye, "Marx, the Nineties, and the American Myth," op. cit.

and perhaps more important, to recognize that it is precisely this hope of office and this "matter-of-fact" political thinking which have helped the American system to meet the pragmatic test. The system has "worked"—despite the lack of ideology, despite the spirit of moderation, despite the inconsistency and incoherence of party platforms. The economic problems confronting American statecraft have been met with remarkable success, and the people have been satisfied with the performance. Content with the general functioning of the economic mechanism, they have been disinclined to inquire into its theoretical structure. Their general apathy, as Seymour Lipset points out, reflects the fact that "the fundamental political problems of the industrial revolution have been solved: the workers have achieved industrial and political citizenship; the conservatives have accepted the welfare state; and the democratic left has recognized that an increase in over-all state power carries with it more dangers to freedom than solutions for economic problems." At least on the domestic front, economic problems have been resolved without a resort to ideological blueprints. And, projecting the past, it is problable that the democratic class struggle of the future will be "a fight without ideologies, without red flags, without May Day parades."42

Significantly enough, this atmosphere of moderation is not confined to the United States. Already there are signs in many countries of Western Europe that old symbols and ancient stereotypes have lost their appeal. With increased prosperity, rising incomes, and greater educational opportunities, the socioeconomic isolation of the West European proletariats has been reduced and with it, their class-conscious militancy. No wonder a Swedish editor, commenting on conditions in his own country, can say that "politics is now boring," and that the only remaining issues are "whether the metal workers should get a nickel more an hour, the price of milk should be raised, or old-age pensions extended.⁴³ No wonder that political leaders in Great Britain,

⁶² Seymour M. Lipset, *Political Man*, New York, Doubleday & Company, 1960, pp. 406, 408.

⁴³ Quoted ibid., p. 406.

according to one of their number, often have the job of persuading "their followers that the traditional policy is still being carried out, even when this is demonstrably not true." No wonder that the West German Socialists have abandoned everything but a ritualistic adherence to their erstwhile orthodoxy, and that the British Labour Party has recently decided to dispense even with that transparent formality. One set of events, viz. those emerging from the industrial revolution, produced the ideological controversies of the last century. A different set of events, viz. the reforms to cope with that revolution, are successfully liquidating these controversies. And, on balance, this process of adjustment and pacification cannot be condemned except by the intellectuals (the ideologues of the Left and Right) who no longer find politics exciting—who no longer have an outlet for their idealistic dedication and utopian dreams.

In offering these conclusions, I do not mean to endorse either smugness or complacency, blandness or vacuity. As a student of politics, I am aware that a constitutional democracy, burdened with checks and balances, weighted in favor of weak and negative government, cannot easily shoulder the burdens of the positive state. This, I know, requires the catalytic influence of a strong president—the leadership of a Lincoln, a Wilson, a Theodore Roosevelt, or a Franklin Roosevelt—a president who is more than what Bagehot would have called an "uncommon man of common opinions." As an economist, I am also aware

⁴⁴ Quoted ibid., pp. 405-06. This is the statement of Richard H. Crossman, Member of Parliament.

⁴⁵ At the annual conference of the British Labour Party in 1960, the delegates voted overwhelminghly (4,304,000 to 2,226,000) to take a revolutionary stride to the "right." Turning their backs on traditional socialist dogma, the delegates decided instead to give priority to a type of "New Deal" welfare program. They declared that the party's aims are broader than state ownership of industry, and that the major concern at the moment ought to be the elimination of class privilege. Over the violent objections of fundamentalists on the "left," the party endorsed a platform designed to improve its chances at the next election. Opting for pragmatic compromise rather than ideological purity, the party apparently felt that half a loaf was better than none. (*The New York Times*, October 7, 1960). On the growth of political pragmatism in Japan, see Denis Warner, "Prosperity Unlimited," *New Republic*, December 5, 1960, p. 10.

that the economic millennium is by no means at hand—that America today is confronted by public squalor in the midst of private affluence, by depressed areas and a declining growth rate, by hungry children and an inadequate system of medical care. Like President Kennedy, I am concerned about "an America with too many slums, with too few schools, and too late to the moon and outer space." At the same time, I cannot believe that the election of Mr. Nixon would have doomed the nation or forestalled, in any crucial or ultimate sense, the solution of these problems. To be sure, Mr. Nixon might not have faced up to these problems with the same speed, vigor, and conviction as Mr. Kennedy. But, whatever his personal views or doctrinaire preferences, he too would have had to respond to the compulsions of American pragmatism. He too would have had to submit to the logic of events, the force of circumstances.

One final word, lest I be accused of incorrigible optimism. In the area of international relations, which presents probably the greatest challenge of our time, I view the future with less than sanguine anticipation. This is precisely the field in which ideology is strongest and pragmatism least persuasive-in America as well as in Western Europe and behind the Iron Curtain. There may be experiential tests for judging the performance of the "welfare" state or the effectiveness of a government stabilization policy; but by what pragmatic yardstick does the electorate measure the importance of defending Quemoy and Matsu, establishing a technical assistance program, or undertaking unilateral disarmament? How does the electorate make a nonideological choice between aggressive liberation and competitive co-existence, between disengagement and brinkmanship, between East-West trade and economic warfare? Here there is an almost irreprensible tendency for ideology to hamstring thought-for shibboleths to stifle imagination. Yet, unless the political leaders on both sides of the Iron Curtain can learn to substitute facts for beliefs, scientific experience for doctrinaire preconceptions, and pragmatic rationality for emotional rabble-rousing, it is doubtful whether the world can escape atomic annihilation.

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

OF A RELIGIOUS RITE

The ceremony of gathering twelve-year old children together in each parish for the first sacrament of the Eucharist is not an old custom. The primitive Church took Christ's word literally: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (John, VI, 53), from which it was generally thought tha: children who died before having received communion were as damned as if they had not been baptised. The initiation of neophytes required successively both sacraments and confirmation. When the custom was established of baptising the new born (2nd and 3rd centuries) they received communion at the same time. As they were incapable of eating the host, the blood of Christ was conferred upon them in the guise of wine.

This custom still remains in force in the Eastern churches, while it rather abruptly disappeared, from the 12th century on,

Translated by S. Alexander.

in the Latin church. In 1215, the Lateran Council prescribed waiting for the age of discretion, without defining when that was; the Council of Trent declared anathema against anyone who acted before that moment. Many priests retained the traditional ancient custom of having the baptised child drink some drops of common table wine in the chalice. Thic practice survived for a long time in the first communion of the new born. Abbé Andrieux in his book on First Communion (Beauchesne, 1912, p. 72), says that in his native Champagne, the parents gave the new-born some drops of good wine to drink at the end of the family dinner following the baptism.

If first communion was conditioned by the age of discretion, it was necessary to define this or, at any rate, approximately fix its date. The Spanish Council of Tarragona (1329) declares that paschal communion is obligatory at the age of fourteen on for boys, and twelve for girls, a curious distinction confirmed by Gerson in his Regulae morales de Eucharistia, when he declares all those qui secundum leges videntur habiles ad nubendum obliged to take paschal communion. In his Doctrina pro pueris eccl. Parisiensis he admits children from the ages of twelve or thirteen to the altar table. Now, St. Thomas simply asked them to be able to know the difference between ordinary bread and Eucharistic bread and to be capable of devotion to the Sacrament.

Little by little, there was introduced a new distinction between the age of reason at six or seven years when the child should know good from evil and must expiate his faults by confession; and the age of discretion, which the rituals avoid setting a time for, but which will prove to be at first communion. In 17th century France, under the influence of Jansenism, there was a tendency to postpone first communion until fifteen, sixteen or even twenty years of age. Nevertheless, Mme de Sévigné

had hers at eight.

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In the meanwhile, the tradition of collective and solemn first communions was established. It resulted from the generalized teaching of the catechism imposed on the clergy by the Council of Trent. Abbé Andrieux has entirely misunderstood this im-

portant point, and that is the only serious gap in this work of a somewhat Gallican tendency. On the other hand, the historians of the Company of Jesus have made this very clear, because of a capital role in religious teaching played by their priests in certain regions, for example in the Spanish Low Countries. A ceremonial is described in the Méthode de catéchisme by Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet at Paris (1656) urging "an experience of forty years." In the Low Countries, Father Alfred Poncelet finds the first example dated at Leyden where on Easter Tuesday, 1620, the Jesuit mission in Holland had fifty-two children of both sexes take communion together, an example which was followed at Tournai in 1645, and at Bruges in 1656. The question of chronological priority is secondary. What should be emphasized is that the custom was born out of the catechism and that it was originally practiced with extreme simplicity. Children had to have a candle which the priest would give to the poor. The candle, a survival of an initiation rite, will remain obligatory in first communion as well as in baptism. The bishops recommend that all children be modestly garbed and that the ceremony be brief, ending with the parish mass. In 1725, Benedict XIII, authorized children to be dressed in white, in habitu angelorum, but he advised them rather to come in their everyday clothes, provided they be suitable, without pomp or pretension. Practices differed according to regions. At the time of the French Revolution communicants simply wore a white armband. In certain districts perhaps the girls were dressed in white as this passage from the Génie du Christianisme (I, 7) would indicate: "It is at twelve years of age, it is in the springtime of the year that the adolescent unites himself with his Creator... Young girls dressed in linen and boys decked out in foliage march on a road sown with the year's flowers..."

Chateaubriand might well have embellished reality somewhat. He emphasizes the coincidence of first communion and springtime. Primitively linked to paschal duty, the ceremony detached itself from it little by little because at Eastertime the clergy were

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¹ Alfred Poncelet, Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les anciennes Pays-Bas, 1926, vol. II, p. 316; E. de Moreau, L'Eglise en Belgique des origines au début du XX^e siècle, 1944, p. 185; Histoire de l'Eglise en Belgique, vol. V, 1952, p. 342.

involved in other tasks.² After some wavering, it was set around Pentecost. Some 18th century souvenir-albums have been preserved, mentioning rather different ages and dates: they come from well-to-do families whose children instructed at home could be admitted to the Eucharist outside of the collective ceremony. May we explain in this manner the disparaging criticism lasting up to the middle of the 19th century, a period when first communion is a parish celebration in all French diocese? At the Vatican Council, the French bishops wanted the practice to be made obligatory throughout the Church. Cardinal Gasparri limited himself to recommending it (1897). Pius X established it in Italy (1905).

Then, by the decree *Quam singulari Christus amore* of 28 August 1910, the same Pius X, going back to the Thomistic definition of the age of discretion, authorized first communion as early as first confession, that is to say, toward six or seven years. Logically, to the degree that private first communion became the rule, the collective ceremony should have either taken on new significance, which was the Pope's desire, or else disap-

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Quite to the contrary, it is performed today with an ostentatiousness from which piety has nothing to gain. In many modest families, a first communion burdens the budget for an entire year. In the industrial regions of Belgium the people sink all of their savings into a single one of these celebrations, or go into debt for a long time. And in those circles indifferent to religion, where parents never go to church, expenses are the most senseless of all. The clergy knows it, deplores it, does its best to attenuate the evil, but it cannot suppress the festivity. Paradoxically, the precocious first communion which should have ousted the other, requires that it be maintained. A six year old child can, if absolutely necessary, repent his mistakes and, according to St. Thomas's formulation, distinguish sacramental from ordinary bread; but his religious instruction is null. If the collective ceremony is maintained it is because one of its conditions is teaching, confirmed by an examination. It obliges the

² In the region around Liège, faire ses pâques is used for communion, or for Easter communion. Traditionally, a first communicant is called a pâques.

children to attend catechism. For, many of the families who attach no importance to the sacrament, take its solemnity very seriously and would not deprive their children of it for anything in the world.

The question remains, wherein is derived the exceptional prestige of a celebration so costly for the parents, fatiguing for the children, and by Pius X's decree, deprived of the religious significance which it had from the 13th to the 20th century.

But in the same connection, why has the habit of having some drops of wine drunk immediately after baptism—a survival of the communion of the new-born—been preserved for such a long time? In the Missal of the church at Amiens in 1506. one still reads: "The baptised child is touched with the candle... then carried to the altar; there, he is given communion with ordinary table wine, while saying to him: 'May the flesh and the blood of Our Lord preserve thy soul for everlasting life.' A pure symbol, of course since the wine is not consecrated: but simple folk must have been deceived by it and the formulation was certainly bound to lead into error. Thus, the Reims ritual of 1585 condemns both the practice and the formulation. Others compromised. The ritual of Sens permits the priest to bear the infant to the altar, to take a little wine in the hollow of his left hand and with the right to allow some drops to fall into the infant's mouth, saying: "Receive some of the dew of heaven. May you have wine and oil in abundance, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." (Andrieux, Première communion, p. 70).

If the former practice was so tenacious that it could be destroyed only by practicing it in the wrong way, that is because it corresponds to the archaic feeling that one cannot participate in any group before having drunk or eaten with the tribe. The history of Persephone, bound to the world below for having eaten a pomegranate seed, illustrates the coercive action of manducation in common. When in the 19th century, the parents in Champagne poured some drops of wine on the lips of the baptised infant they enrolled him in the family or religious community: a domestic rite, surviving from a strictly religious rite, behind which may be discerned even much more ancient practices, social and magical at the same time. When Henri d'Albret

rubbed garlic and Jurançon wine on the lips of his new-born grandson, he was adding a national symbol onto a very old liturgy of aggregation, rooted in the deepest levels of the psyche.

These survivals explain a curious error which Andrieux mentions without understanding its origin. Theologians have maintained that at the end of the XVIth century the primitive Church gave communion to the new-born in order to struggle against the idolaters who portioned out to the children the food offered up to the idols. "I have found nowhere," says Andrieux, (p. 86) "even an indirect allusion to this practice." In effect, those who advance this idea (Cardinal William Allen and William Hessels Van Est, Professor at Louvain) have made it up out of the whole cloth. Still unconsciously convinced of the magic power of the *confarreatio*, they have imagined without any further proof, a rite taking its inspiration from it, by which the pagans had forcibly enrolled the new-born into their religious group, and to which the Church was supposed to have opposed an identical method.

The ritual of Sens marks curious transition between the symbolic communion of Amiens and the familiar practice. The ceremony takes place at the altar; the priest may be observed making the prescribed movements of the hands as if it were a question of a veritable liturgy; but the formulation is half-profane; the Savior's blood becomes the dew of heaven; eternal life is replaced by a promise of temporal prosperity. This hybrid rite proves how alive the archaic meaning of manducation in common had remained.

Analogous revisions explain, apart from all religious allegiance, the attachment of the masses to the first collective communion. In the primitive Church the initiation resulted from three sacraments conferred on the same day. The neophyte entered naked into the baptismal pool, then he dressed again in a white tunic in order to receive the Eucharist and confirmation at the same time. Today baptism, first private communion, and confirmation mark three different periods of the child's life. The first solemn communion, as it is generally practiced, does not seem to have its own importance any longer, but is simply a reiteration of the first two and a preparation for the third.

In return, it is unconsciously suffused with pre-Christian

images whose persistent vigor contributes to its social vitality. Among primitive peoples, the young people were initiated into the adult community only amidst proofs and changes of dress often preliminary to simultaneous group marriages. In the catholic world of Western Europe, first communion is explicitly a religious ceremony, implicitly a promotion from childhood to adolescence.

There seems to have been a presentiment of this social meaning at the moment when the Eucharist ceased to be bound up with baptism. The theologians of Tarragona curiously set the commencement of Easter obligation (which was to become ipso facto that of first communion)³ at twelve years of age for girls and fourteen for boys. Gerson specifies the meaning of this distinction by referring it to marriageable age. He writes in an epoch when first communicants did not wear any particular vestment, several centuries before they were dressed as little brides and grooms. Analogous meanings reveal themselves as soon as apparently heterogeneous facts are compared.

The entirely military pedagogy of the Jesuits recognized, in more than a single instance, the age-group ethic of ancient times. When in the Low Countries, they take an essential role in the teaching of catechism they set up congregations and sodalities everywhere; they appeal to emulation; they force the children to take examinations, and undergo retreats; they gather them together in processions and cortèges. They utilize for religious purposes, the prestige inherent in any group to which admission

is possible via an examination.

They have, therefore, contributed towards giving the ceremony its accessory and unformulated character of promotion to adolescence. Nothing, however, had been further from their minds than to stress this aspect of the festivity by means of clothing having a nuptial association. Neophytes wear the *habitus angelorum* of Benedict XIII; it is certainly not limited to girls, as Andrieux wrongly says, projecting a 19th century practice

³ See note 2.

⁴ In 1728, at the catechumen refuge in Turin, Rousseau still saw a more or less converted Moor "baptised with great ceremony and dressed in white from head to foot" (Confessions, II).

into the 18th. And this is also the meaning of the neophyte's garment summed up in the white armband, worn on "everyday

clothing."

In the 19th century the decoration and symbolism changes. In 1802, Chateubriand is the first to speak of young girls in "linen robes" as he is the only one who has ever described boys "decked out in foliage." The idyllic colors of this picture would seem to belie the age of the communicants as twelve. What Chateaubriand finds in his memories, which he probably embellishes, is less the initiation of a neophyte than a springtime

marriage rite when nature itself is nuptial.

By a series of transitions unknown to us, the development is completed by the first third of the century: all the children are dressed as brides and grooms. Soon the sons of the bourgeoisie will wear silklined tuxedos, then a complete Eton; the white armband alone still recalls the neophyte's former dress. In more modest groups, they receive, in all cases, their first long trousers. The girls wear veils, the characteristic wedding accessory since antiquity, since it is the obnubilatio capitis which gave their name to the noces. On the other hand, the white bridal gown does not seem to date back before the 20th century.5 It has never been adopted except in the upper classes. In former times, the women of the bourgeoisie were married in the attire which, later, they had to wear again on special occasions—often a black silk dress. In this case, also, the stages of the transition are lost to us. What is certain is that from about 1840 to 1920, first communion is carried out in such a manner that an unprepared observer would think he was present at simultaneous group marriages of children disguised as adults. The ambiguity will not startle those who remember that in Greek the same word refers to initiations and marriage.

Since the second World War, many priests feel that Pius X's decree is generally misunderstood and that in order to fulfill it, it is necessary to draw a distinction in role, significance and symbolism, between first admission to the Eucharist and the repetition during the 12th year, the latter becoming essentially a thoughtful

⁵ Costly and uncomfortable regional costumes also date from this time. As far as I know, the appearance of these has never been psychologically explained.

renewal of baptismal yows and a profession of faith incorporating the child into the Christian community. Such a reform would use for the benefit of a solemn vow the social meanings which first collective communion has been suffused with during the course of centuries. At the same time, the adornment of dress would be reduced to a minimum. Many French and Belgium parishes lend acolyte albs to the boys and muslin tunics to the gilrs. This last reform is not proceeding without difficulty. The bridal dress is defended by ready-made clothing shops, by a certain maudlin literature which treats them as though they were indeed the habitus angelorum and, finally, by the girls themselves, who always eclipsed by their brothers have only two days in their life when they are the center of attention, that of their first communion and that of their marriage: a significant coupling. An inquiry in customs would certainly reveal many synonymous details. I don't know when the practice began of giving adult gifts: a missal, a fountain pen, a camera. The watch, an obligatory present, introduces the child into the adolescent world.

Toward 1910, among the populace of Liège, the hero of the festivity was invited to smoke his first cigar at the end of the banquet. He certainly took less pleasure than pride in an experience which often ended very badly. But with his bowler hat, his first long trousers, proud of the suit which he will wear only once, he feels himself initiated into adult society, like the young Roman who had laid down his praetexta toga in front of the altar of the lares and dressed himself again in a man's toga over the tunica recta, the initiation dress which new recruits and young brides also wore.

Italian practices are rather different than ours. Since religious teaching is given in all schools, the clergy has no fundamental reason to solemnize the twelfth year reiteration rite, which essentially serves among us to assure attendance at catechism. First communion is taken at seven years of age, in groups. This practice holds for Italy, as well as for the very numerous Italian colonies of industrial Belgium where national rites are preserved. Confirmation assumes the character of a promotion rite. At that

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⁶ See the lucid and courageous book by Gaucheron, L'Eglise de France et la communion des enfants, Paris, Ed. du Cerf, 1952.

time, the child receives many gifts. In the Midi, a little girl usually offhandedly will find herself being offered the beginnings of her future trousseau, even the bed linen.

One may draw analogous social meanings from confirmations in protestant countries, and even more, perhaps, in the lay re-

joinders invented by anti-clerical proselytism.

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There have been, and there still are, "first rationalistic communions." In East Germany, the State has become aware of the fact that it will supplant Christianity only by taking lessons from it. Collective initiations have been instituted, in which adolescents are solemnly consecrated as future members of the Democratic Republic. The Jugendweihe also exists in the Federal Republic, organized by groups with Socialist tendencies, although the Party refuses any official patronage. The ceremony, which takes place at confirmation time, involves folk dancing and choirs, but there is also instruction denouncing Christianity as the main enemy of moral progress in the world because it places man's hopes in a fallacious beyond. The Jugendweihe which has existed at Hamburg since 1946, enrolled around 30,000 adolescents over a period of fifteen years. This year, it was celebrated in the university festival-hall by 1,350 participants (as against 10,000 Evangelical confirmations). In other cities, it has even much less success.7

When Pius XII proclaimed the physical presence of the Virgin in Paradise, Jung saw in that dogma the greatest event of the century: the integration of the anima at the heart of the masculine Trinity and the end of the conflict between Nature and Spirit, resulting from the absorption of the first into the radiant sphere of the second. The dogma learned, not without astonishment, that it was a projection of the collective conscious.

An observance cannot become popular if its rituals are not rooted in the depths of the psyche. But the more strongly they

⁷ Der Spiegel, May 3, 1961, p. 46.

are, the more also they tend to proliferate into vagrant branches,

which run the risk of stifling the principal stem.

At the present time, first collective communion is laden with emotions which pervaded ancient rites of aggregation, transition, and initiation. Slowly they have found their place, affirming themselves openly in the 19th centuriy, to the point of obscuring in popular imagination the very meaning of the sacrament which provoked their resurgence. They have become an end in themselves. The Church, conforming to the intentions of Pius X, wishes to give a new sense, that of a profession of faith to the Eucharistic reiteration during the 12th year. It will achieve that only by freeing the faithful from a parasitic ritual which they have developed, without the Church making any objection to it at the time, because it was the creation of a bourgeoisie whom the Church considered its ally. Il must count on resistance. The communion of the new-born under the symbol of wine, abolished in the 13th century, was still being practiced at the end of the 16th.

ART IS TEMPORAL

Art is eternal. Beauty is pure pleasure. Genius in creation and taste in appreciation are one.—One is accustomed to encounter such time-honored aesthetic views and one takes them often without questioning whether they adequately honor time. On the following pages a different approach to art will be outlined; on its horizon these views and many others which need not be cited now, will appear as false. Some hallowed names can be invoked as authority for them. So much the worse. Amicus Plato sed magis amica veritas.

Considerations surrounding the sophisticated and complex concept of aesthetic value, human longings for permanence and for community, unjustified claims of equality—these and other factors tend toward acceptance of some such view of art as this: the artists and their public share alike in aesthetic enjoyment which is the common thread of their spiritual conversation on terms of partnership across the ages. This overwhelming tendency may be shaken if not shattered by the asking of such awkward yet indispensable questions as: How is it that the Hellenes, inferior to none on the fields of art, used to conceive their artists, specifically poets, as "makers" of things, and not to aim at distin-

guishing them from artisans? Whence the artistic anxiety and rebellion at being so much "in advance" of contemporaries? Is it "permitted" to be unashamedly bored in certain regions of art history? These questions do not seem at first glance to have anything in common. How they belong together may become clearer when art is touched by the all-embracing arm of time—which is man's own arm.

The thesis to be developed here is that in all human art there are essential dividing yet not alienating phases grounded in future, present and past. In varying ways the same men may participate in all these phases, to varying extent. The names used for these phases will be: *creation*, *experience*, *and bistory*. But it is not names that matter.

The first theme to be sounded will be that of the *object*. The word has been chosen as relatively safe in not taking too much for granted. It does not presuppose the status of objet d'art, nor yet in English of a work of art, since what such a status may mean remains to be questioned.

Imagine yourself in the act of composing, in whatever medium. That which will result is not yet there, but from "nowhere" it presses and demands to be effected, by you. You have your intimations, sketches, wishes; they are not the object. What is there is of course a quantity of physical things: a blank page or canvas, some clay or bricks, plus the ink in your pen, the colors in your tubes, the utensils of labor. These are given to you by physis; they are not your object. It is the latter which is the task of art. It is up to you to com-pose, and that means to "put together," those physical materials. How? If you knew that, you would be ready. The relevance of asking: "how?" indicates that there is a way, that an arbitrary manner, one as good as another, will not do. But because you have to grope, because it must be your object, you have no recipe handy to follow. What is to arise is now only an object-to-be. You hope to be the one who will make it into an object. The resistance of the medium, of your own unreadiness, impatience and tiredness, lies all in the not-yet-there. But you persist, and something emerges, the page

is scribbled over, the clay takes shape. What is there now? That which you have to work over, remake, align, im-prove. What is there now is less an object than an objection, "thrown across" your striving. This is why you hate so much, but submit to, the job of correcting and emending. Step by step, there is less to be made, the end is nearing, it is finally there: the object. Whether you are satisfied or just exhausted, you accept it, at least for the time being. There is no longer an object-to-be for you. But what does that mean? No less than that your intimacy with it is ended, you are no longer a maker making and justifying this name. Except for the understandable pride not unmixed with anxiety, you have exhausted your privilege and now become—a member of the public whose many-keyed judgment will let itself be heard and may drown your own voice.

Artistic creation concerns exclusively an object-to-be. When such an entity is no longer in question, the making is over and the artist no longer enjoys an exclusive advantage over others contemplating the object which is now there for them as well as for him. Creation is a bond from the future. The inequality between the creating genius and the appreciative public is so likely to be forgotten and denied, because it has no ground in the present. Imaginative proving and improving of the present object appeals as much to its author as to all critics with taste.

Now take a place in the anonymous crowd of art lovers: at an actual exhibition in Paris, Venice or New York, at a performance in a theatre or hall, or with a book in hand in the privacy of your room. What is there for you? An object you witness. An object on display: it plays with your imagination, it disports itself within your senses, it yields to you but in a challenging way. You appropriate it in your own great or limited capacity and may rightly reject anyone else's interpretation of it. The object is fully available to you; why should you need an interfering judgment? On the other hand, you just ex-perience it: you sound in the depth of something "being born to you." The object is present, you have not finished with it. It may yield novelties, even if it is not your first acquaintance with it. Can you be sure you have grasped the total meaning of it, if you do not know what it was to-be? You know of schemes and groupings of such objects, seemingly, as this. But how do you know that precisely this, which is

available to you, is the romantic expression, the perfect form, the stylized cry of faith? The critic and his standards are at hand; you may be guided by them or insist on your own taste alone. You are equal to others as long as the object is available to you, showing itself but inviting to further mysteries. The display is

the life of this object for you; it must be continuous.

Artistic experience, for which the German word "Erleben" is more telling, is live being-with-the-object. The primary consideration for it is not whether a member of the public comes armed with a guidebook, an elaborate program, or even an aesthetic encyclopedia, whether he relies upon systematized judgments, or on the contrary enters empty-handed and naive into the intercourse with the object; what matters is whether he enters. This is the democratic equal chance for all opened in art. It is a general invitation for continuous presence. The object need not be here for anyone a "work" of art, in the conscious sense of its having been worked out, laboriously but marvelously, by a single maker. Nor need it be an exquisite and precious "objet d'art," to be appreciated only by an élite; to claim that as a standard is to fall prey to snobbism which predetermines experience. What the object must be is present, taking hold of the beholder, playing with him in its display with no ulterior aim, with no imposed termination or determination.

And now imagine yourself engaged in research, paging through disintegrating manuscripts, digging for relics underground, or simply walking in hushed reverence through a museum. That is a house of the Muses, and they were born of Mnemosyne—remembrance. What is now there for you is to be re-membered, re-collected, re-called from oblivion, from misunderstanding, even from absence. You are a historian: you have to direct your whole devoted effort toward presenting the object, making it live again. Therefore you cannot claim that the object is present. Of course, again something is there: the physical shapes and materials. But that is never sufficient for a historian of art. Here your task is to get the object into full display, to let it live and speak-now, to make be-holding possible. And up to a point, this task is an ideal not to be fulfilled completely. Because your object is past, surpassed, and instead of approaching it is moving away from you with time. Time which favors you as a

creator concerned with that which is to-be, works against you as a historian concerned with what has-been object. If you were not human, the task would be impossible, the past would be dead. Being historical, you, a man, can face your perhaps overambitious aspiration with a certain tenacity. That which has-been-object is not fallen into nothingness, at least not for you, otherwise you would not be a historian of art. However difficult, your task is to re-cover the object with the mantle of awareness. In order to do it, you try to understand what has been an object displayed and present to others, long ago, you try to collect together how, where, and why it was present to them, as well as what it was to-be for him who made it. Never able to change the status of what has been into a living presence in display, you can still let it play together, for you and your contemporaries, with what is there now constituting objects of art, and also with what is vet to be. You cannot live or make anyone else live now with some cannibal daemonology, nor with Hellenic assurance, not even with the amorous elegance of ancien régime; yet you can affect artistic experience and creation now by re-calling into awareness African totems, Athenian pottery, the manuscripts of Casanova or Crébillon fils.

Art history is serving the Muses well, in the least hopeful and most forget-full assignments. It is concerned with recollecting that which has been the object of art, first in creation, then in experience. It is therefore unavoidably turned toward the past. but refuses to admit the death of that past. The question may be asked how to draw a line between objects of art which are still fully present and those which have been surpassed; to that each questioner has to supply his own answer. Obviously it is not just the datable age of any object that decides the issue universally, since anything aged anyhow is, strictly, sinking into the past. One viewpoint could claim that American literature of the thirties belongs to what has-been, because of disillusionment after World War Two; another, that classical sculpture is fully alive in the present, despite the Dark Ages. Because the past, if not infinite, is at any rate inexhaustible, the historian must make a selection. Here the right of making selections is again equal for all, but on the other hand the power of recovering and re-presenting what has been as though it were still there, in other words the

actual performance of art history, may be only an attainment of very few.

It may be supposed, as an objection against the preceding paragraphs, that there is some faulty asymmetry in counterposing an object-to-be, measurable in terms of only days or months of creation, to what has-been-object, extending into historical centuries and epochs. What can be said in reply to this may serve to clarify pertinent thoughts. First, asymmetry need not be objectionable, not even aesthetically, and certainly not with reference to something as non-arbitrarily given as the "temporal shape" of art. Second, the temporal status of an object-to-be is not to be exhausted by pointing to the actual if intermittent creative labor of artists; it is rather what artists, as well as visionaries, moralists and the like, have to draw upon in order to justify themselves as such, but how long and how often they bind themselves that way, is quite another question. Third, this question rests upon categories which have not been introduced above, viz. quantitative ones, while the discussion has not treated of entities which can be quantitatively, measurably, scientifically handled, only of qualities, future, past, present; these are perhaps indeed qualities par excellence, co-ordinate vet never com-mensurable; in human experience they are pure qualia which cannot be commingled, however close they may be brought, they withstand each other, toto coelo differing and un-unifiable. Is such temporal thinking difficult to rationalize? Still, it is very relevant to art, though not necessarily to science. And while men may or may not live rationally, they cannot help living temporally; from that there is no escape even in madness. Perhaps only in mathematics; are qualities negated there-or neglected?

The second theme to emerge from the same phases of art will be the *disposition* of man in one of the situations already outlined. The word "disposition" is not to be understood psychologically as meaning no more than a mental state or feeling; rather, it refers to the whole condition of the person concerned—but not alone, the relation of that person to the object—but insofar as that concerns him. It will receive more light in what follows.

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When as a creator of art you are composing an object-to-be, how are you disposed with regard to it? A simplified but unanswerable way of putting this question would be to ask: where is it? Your object is obviously nowhere as yet. Nevertheless, far from assenting to its nothingness, you have to acknowledge a very positive disposition of your own towards it. In an indefinitely metaphorical sense, you can say that it is still within, within yourself. Your reaching-for, your activity physical as well as mental, your spatial motion even, is all pregnant with it. You walk "toward" it, you smile "at" it, you are weighed "down" by its awkwardness, you let its subtleties slip "through." The object imposes its demands upon you along with its attractions. But is this description not too onesided? It is you, after all, who are so thoroughtly involved in your own composition, there is no possible pressure from outside. You are working toward it, that is, you are working toward vourself working toward it, toward yourself making yourself a maker of things. Who says: this is "not yet" it? You do. You want to make it this way and not another, you expect it to be still better thus still harder for yourself. The whole scope of your being disposed toward the object-to-be can be understood as your im-position. It is your own involvement to such a degree that you may not know any longer whether you would be still yourself if you abandoned your creation, whether you could give it up or destroy it as something alien, whether it is at all destructible as long as you remain alive. But this imposition is also your glory, your exuberant advantage over the world, over all other people: it is of your making.

The disposition of the creating artist is such that it is impossible to distinguish between "him" and "it," between passivity and activity as within this relation. The object-to-be is his, not by right of an overpowering grasp but by intertwined belonging. This has been called an "imposition," but only in this neutral fashion, since the artist has in him both suffering patiency and victorious agency. It is understood in the sense of what Nietzsche called "dancing in self-imposed chains." Considered by any other than the creator's own self, however, his making of his object-to-be appears as an enviable and unique activity, in comparison with

which others remain as a merely passive background.

How is it with you now when you are a spectator or a listener,

what is your disposition with regard to the object? The object is displayed to you from outside, it is somewhere in external space, it is not yours exclusively. Between you and it there remains a distance never to be wholly traversed, and it is not a simply spatial distance, either. You can leave the talk of perfection to those who think they are paying their membership in the aesthetic community by some such phrases: "It is all perfect, but—I love especially..." which is presumably more perfectly perfect. If you are open enough, you know that the allegro remains for you unrelated to the gloom of the preceding adagio, that the splash of red on upper right appears to you slightly vulgar, that you find no ground for the conspiracy against the hero. To the object which is "thrown across" or even "against" your experience, you stay in op-position. But this is not to be understood as conflict or hostility which would make dis-play impossible; perhaps best on the model of the House of Commons: opposition which is loyal and tied to the party it opposes not only by the code of fair play but by a sense of common endeavor in the same direction through opposed approach. Your opposition in the distance of the object is involved in your approaching to it, in your aim to penetrate into what it has been made-to-be, in your ex-periencing it. And so the object also constitutes an im-position upon you. You envy the activity of the creator and you wish to identify yourself with him as closely as possible: does this not justify your restless search for what the artist was trying to express? In your eager beholding and being-held-with the object you forgive and try to forget its imperfections which make it alien. What you do not forgive is its alienness, its not being yours; that you want to dispose of entirely. You accept the imposed chains and pretend they fit you and essay to dance and play in them. How strong is your talent for forgetting-yourself?

In the experience of art the disposition of the person is in a way dialectical. There is in it as much of passionate involvement in the present object as of distance from it merely because it must remain an "it." These antithetical tendencies are referred to as imposition and opposition. But it would seem that in case of genuine experience of art there is not anything as simple as a straight antithesis, because by the nature of human reality while the opposition to the object is imposed upon the individual, the

imposition is opposed as long as he is this individual. Mystics may have some facilities for resolution here; ordinary humans have not. There is no doubt that while this dialectical tension cannot be disregarded, the ideal of artistic experience is some union transcending it. Perhaps the all-unifying illumination of mysticism is nothing else but the reifying of this ideal; the author has no mystical qualifications. It would be difficult to label with a single term the described disposition of a person experiencing art. The word "com-position" might come closer than any other to fulfilling this purpose. Unfortunately, it has, also on these pages, its use in describing the creation of art; and whatever the mystics aim at, to equate here creation with experience after what has been

said already would be absurd.

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A simpler if less hopeful disposition awaits you in the task of a historian of art. The object has-been artistic; as such, it is no longer and is nowhere, in a sense different from an object-to-be. It has less of the negative character of not-yet-there-at-all, because it has already been created and experienced. But for you living now it has been surpassed; this is the challenge of your situation. The surpassed object is what you want to re-cover, re-member from its disintegration in the past. Its sinking into nothing is what you are op-posed to. The striving is yours, that which only has-been an object must be supported by you, not vice versa: it does not im-pose itself upon you, except in the measure as you already have committed yourself to opposing its own passing. When distance in present experience is either recommended or lamented, you may well smile and wonder how: the incomparable distance from that which is no more, that is your element, what you can object and despair about. As long, however, as your disposition is maintained historically, you must be opposed to that element, and opposed actively. In actuality what you oppose is your own and your contemporaries' forgetting and forgoing of everything to which they owe their art but which without support is falling into extinction. You have this active task now, and a task not on your own behalf: you assume a stance for the common past while you yourself cannot help your distance from it. The threats you can not eliminate against the object surpassed are those of misplacement, mis-interpretation, evanescence, chaos, all tending toward annihilation. In such a disposition you cannot dream of

identifying yourself with the maker. His chains have slipped down, his dance faded away. Your opposing intent is to initiate a second dance, even if it means forging new chains. A tradition of sacrifice must be yours: learning to relight the splendors not just of caliphs and pharaohs but of obscured Aztecs, Hittites, perhaps of Atlantides—and knowing that these are not yours. Imposition of objects from the past upon your age's art may be your goal; in all deserved pride of achievement this imposition persists as external also for you, from such past as you are opposing.

The characteristic disposition in art history is then an opposition which aims at being imposed, but the latter cannot be taken for granted. The surpassed object having a quasi-dead quality, the revivifying efforts of the historian cannot bridge the gap distancing it from him. He must suffer from it the more, the stronger his devotion and even the more successful he is in representing what has been. Because the more he "lives" in the past, the more poignantly he must experience that he does not live in the past. This inescapable failure of his activity need not

be vain, however.

The clue to the appreciation of the above conceptions of imposition and opposition lies probably in the analysis of seemingly simple words "mine" and "not-mine." But how these can be applied, elusively and paradoxically, in concrete human dispositions, can be seen only by reference to what temporal qualities offer. Thus the creator of art is turned toward what he could call "mine," except that it is not there yet. The person experiencing art is confronted with what is already indubitably there for him, and precisely therefore, however much he would long to call it "mine," he cannot; nor as long as his experience is genuine, can he renounce it as "not-mine." The art historian is recovering what is no longer available but has been, so he must honestly acknowledge it as necessarily "not-mine;" but since consenting to its alienness in his name and for others would be to let it altogether not-be, his recalling leads him to remake it as only vicariously "mine." This statement in terms of personal possession should leave no doubt about the qualitative uniqueness for man of future, present and past; and their relevance to art suggests art's position with the care-full striving for possession in human existence.

The third theme which can be heard from the incommensurable phases of art creation, experience, and history, is that of *rules*. A critical, almost a fighting word in various ways within the domain of art. May the following discussion help to remove some of the difficulties surrounding its legitimacy or illegitimacy in artistic life.

You are composing an object-to-be, imposed upon you by yourself. It is to be your object. That which is not-yet there cannot be already bound and characterized by present and available rules. Further, that which is not-yet wholly yours, is not susceptible to your ruling it; it resists, it is unruly. By the time you acquire a rule over it, it will have been made. But if it is to be made as yours, you are the only one who could rule it. If you let yourself follow, imitate, be ruled by rules of other people, other objects, you can never justify your claim as a maker, neither to others, nor to yourself. If you make something that nicely fits into the rules of past and present, you deny your creative ambition, since you allow the future the character of a delayed copy—is this creation? Of course, how you are, how you approach your task, cannot be postulated in terms of an abrupt beginning. You have been, consciously and unconsciously, exposed to the influence of the work of others and of their rules. This cannot be denied, unless hypocritically. On the other hand, you can only regard the other rules as suggestive aid, not as a substitute for what you are to give of yourself. You dare not accept those rules qua rules. And yet you have to rule the object, otherwise your toil will continue forever unaccomplished. Is there an exit from this predicament? One thing is clear: the rule is not to be antecedent to the object. The artist who has no other "inspiration" for working but to produce "a sonnet," "a classical symphony," "a monument," deserts the ranks he professes to advance. If you do not want to detract from your expected triumph, you cannot diminish, shortcut, sterilize the awe-full encounter which is to deserve it. What makes this encounter full of awe is that it faces the un-ruly, un-orderly, chaotic as yet-because it is-not yet. The complete involvement in the object which is yet to be, which means in your own future, is hauling the object out of that not-

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yet, creating it yourself, in other words *shaping the rule* for this very object, your own rule over it. That is your chain and your dancing rhythm, that is the meaning of the claim that this object is "to-be" as yours. This is what forthcoming ex-perience of others will try to get at and envy, what succeeding history will try to re-collect fully and fail. The collection, the imposition of this object is yours alone; this is your rule, if you are a creator.

Treating of creation in art may not altogether avoid the significance of its conceptual descendance from creatio ex nihilo. While the purely ontological question of nothingness cannot be raised directly since the artist creates from what is physically given, the fact that an artist is turned toward a future which is to be but is not vet dictates a stern demand. It is closing one's eyes to the futurity of the future, when one permits "creation" subject to what is and has been the rule. Rules must be rules over something; is future some thing now, other than what is vet to be? And are those who stake their lot on the future, the human creators. in any way exempt from this demand? Naturally, one does not expect every painting to initiate a revolution equal to the impressionists', nor every musician to be a Beethoven, although it will be only substantiating his creative power, if he stands up to emulate the greatest. But the ability to rule his object on his own, and that can mean both agreeing and breaking with former rules but never in subjection to them, is a conditio sine qua non for an artist. The final absurdity of teaching creativity remains to be taken seriously in American education.

What is to be your regard for rules in experiencing art? The object is present in display and you are trying to sound its depth. You aim at some ideal union with it, at harmony such as you imagine to have been achieved between it and its maker. To the extent in which this is your clear objective you must then also exercise independence from rules and standards of others, emulating the creator who did it. But you can realize the remoteness of such a goal and recoil before the awe-full test the artist had to face alone. Then you legitimately reach for company and guidance, questioning critics, theories of style, comparisons of various experiences. Still, this is not, nor could it be an *automatic* process, as long as art is in question. If this is a sonata in continuation of Mozart, a novel such as Stendhal, Dostoevski, Conrad wrote, then it is

definitely a failure; but was it to-be such a composition? If an architect's product is meant to have four walls and a roof, then he who planned this building was not an architect; or was he? Will any completely up to date aesthetic guidebook decide such questions for you? You should not let it, while you realize that it may "cover" all possible specimens but only up to now, and that this object which you face now has been created in a turn to the future. Wanting to ex-perience it thoroughly, you must let it be your experience; and that means an ineradicable element of lonely suspension between this creative challenge and the rearguard strength of rules you know. The rule is born with the work. Your problem is to apply it, to harmonize it with what you had seen, heard or read, to get used to it. Your problem is to move against the opposition to which this unknown shape disposes you, and to impose it upon yourself as though it was yours naturally. Your problem is to overcome the airen aspect of this being someone's artificial creation and, in the Kantian phrase, "to experience art as if it was nature."

Rules in artistic experience are both indispensable and insufficient. On account of the average aesthetic frailty of persons who experience art, it would be folly to dispense with critics and critical standards or even to object against such aid as they provide. They are not only a necessary evil but even not quite an evil. On the other hand, what must be denounced is a tendency toward the tyranny of rules. With regard to present experience of art, it is not merely a matter of disapproving such tyranny but of showing as a point of calm fact that it would be self-defeating through prevention of independent experiences. If critical judgments of an art exhibition had to be accepted by all spectators, such an exhibition might as well be visited once by critics and subsequently only by parrots trained to repeat on exit the critical words. An understanding critic dares not presume to utter a complete and universal judgment of a work, though he might secretly wish for it; because he understands that all his rules reach not what is to-be, that they must be applied in the present tentatively, unless the future is to be just like the present. That would put an end to art and to its critics.

A different situation confronts you, if you are an art historian. The object for you is not present, it has been. There is no pos-

sibility for you to harmonize in concrete interplay with the forcible imposition of someone's expression. You have to make the object speak; without you it will recede into dark silence. Your horizon extends into chaos, too, but not the chaos of that which is vet to-be; rather the chaos which you cannot possibly accept as sheer negation, since it is the bourn of what is now, the lost matrix through which has been made all that you witness in the present. You cannot suffer such loss; and yet that which only has been gives you scant support, you have gradually to re-impose your own reasoning self upon those fragile materials. To re-collect them, you have to give them a pattern, not exactly the pattern they bore when they were present: the pattern of your own reasoning. And so the rules which are born in creation of art. which are being applied in its present experience, must be rationalized in its history. You know quite well that this is a substitute, that how you recover and rearrange your relics differs from how they were in their youthful spring. You have to reason on your own whence Minoan or Inca art took its presence; being neither a Cretan nor a Peruvian and, what is more crucial, not of those days, you cannot pretend that you are restoring its original meaning, not even when dealing with much closer periods and works. But you have a certain advantage over them: when their art was present, new, tentative, their pattern of it could only be in the process of uncertain application. Your rules have the weight of historical distance, and no matter how false they might be. they are still a tremendous conquest from the abyss of oblivion. Your rules bridge the surpassed objects and those you live with. Your rules, almost like those of the artists themselves, cannot be challenged except by someone with equal opportunity and courage for reconstruction.

The rules of art history have thus a privileged status. Only they can treat confidently of the limits of romanticism and classicism, of proper form for a fugue, an allegory, an ode, of how a genre or style arises and degenerates. That theirs is only a second rhythm is unavoidable, since what is not surpassed is not susceptible yet of rational pattern. It follows that every critic worthy of the name must be a historian of art: without a good perspective into the past his present pronouncements have no authority. Thus Aristotle's dictum: "Beauty depends on size and order" need

not at all be questioned, when it is understood that its validity extends historically into those directions where the *appropriate* size and order can be rationally determined, because the view is complete. The present taste, be it exquisite, is not a rival of historical judgment and its rules. One may now dislike and miss something in the Italian Quattrocento; nevertheless, what it did achieve rests in the hands of art historians. It is up to them to re-present what has been and its rules with such appeal to their own time that it should be capable of playing within the imposition of present creation and experience. Their success cannot

be guaranteed; if it were, it would again mean tyranny.

The above outline may be used to clarify the issue of rules in art, where equal zeal and insistence appear both in the cause of a search for, and in that of the right to the breach of, rules. It indicates that rigidity of rules is impossible in that phase of art which is turned toward the future, because of its future character; there is, after all, the question of induction even in science and strict prediction of uniform future is admissible only in abstract thought systems. It indicates, on the contrary, the inescapable need of rules in that phase of art which is turned toward the past, again because of its passed character; that which is not sustained in human remembrance becomes for humanity such as if it never were, and how the presence of the present is due to sources out of mind can only be reconstructed by reasoning. It indicates the intermediate and fluid status of rules in that phase of art which is turned toward the present, because that is no more than a threshold on which man is uncertainly balanced between what is to be and what has been; to regard the present as complete in itself and so determinable by rules is a temptation to which some great minds yielded, and after them the masses. Despite the loud arrogance of some journalists, there is no such thing as contemporary history.

The perceptive may have observed by now that this approach to art draws its original inspiration from the thought of Martin Heidegger. This is frankly and thankfully acknowledged. It would be but poor gratitude to Heidegger's disclosure of human

temporality, if the author of these pages were to leave the self-contradictory impression of each of the three *ec-stasies* of future, past, and present, resting within itself and alien to the others. Such an impression may have been produced thus far, because the intent of the preceding discussion was primarily to bring out the specific qualitative differences of the temporal phases of art which have been called creation, history and experience. Their separated images must be collected: already on the first page it was asserted that these three phases of art are "dividing yet not alienating."

A beginning of this collecting task can well be made with a paraphrase of what is in Heidegger's thought a crucial expression in terms of "letting-be." Thus a pervading thread of aspirations concerning art can be expressed with varying accent in the phrase: "You let it be." The accent in case of creation is put on "you." It is you who bring the object out of its not-yet-being, but not out of nothing, only out of the changeable physis; you are to collect and rule it by your power of com-position; it is to-be yours, intimately, indistinguishably, your im-position upon the world. In case of experience, the accent is put on "let it." You, but also everyone else equal to you, let the object play in your awareness; you let it impose its external presence upon you and stay with it; you let it show its depth, with the aid of rules only part of the way since you are endeavoring to transcend your op-position to it and to let it rule you. The accent is put on "be" in case of history. You are actively devoted to the surpassed object and realizing your temporal op-position, without a personal claim upon it, you undertake to save it; you wish to re-collect it and let it live again, re-imposing it upon what is available and to come; without your reasoning reconstruction of its rule, it would not surmount the gravity of what has-been once and would be irrecoverably lost, for men it would be no more.

Such variations on this one expression suggest that however incommensurable the temporal phases of art have to remain, their objectives are not in discord with each other. But with even the most apt phrases guiding to certain thoughts, one must not hypnotize oneself with their marvelous consonance but rather think through what they call out.

In the human domain of art, what the phrase: "You let it

be" evokes is a paramount quest for abiding identity in the face of time. The very same object is, or should be—if artistic aspirations can be fulfilled— that which first is to-be by the human hand of a creator, that which human experience is-with in the living presence of it, finally that which has-been but will not die thanks to the efforts of human historians. From the past to the present to the future there is a gulf man must put up with; but the same gulf, no more and no less, divides man's history, experience and creation of art, and it is not impassable. Unless the conception of abiding identity is a fruit of a hopeless nightmare, Humean rather than human, the phases of man's art, qualitatively irreconcilable as they are, need not be without relation or utterly alien to each other. And indeed there are relations among them which do not affect each one's own status but in some measure

assuage the temporal quest of man.

First, let it be said what relations are not possible in view of the preceding discussion. Someone might think that here an obliteration has been effected of some bridging categories which should be reinstated. Thus future art should be distinguished from art of the future, present art from art of the present, and past art from art of the past. The former term in each of these pairs is indeed temporally divergent, but the latter term in them is supertemporally unifying: art of the future is just like that of the present and of the past, there is a common essence in all three. But such a statement leads to what has been here questioned at the very outset, some continuing and successfully communicated discourse across and over the ages, an immutable eternity of art. This must be rejected. To speak of art of the future as though it had to be in community with art experienced now is to beg a question logically, aesthetically, and above all temporally. The main characteristic of art of the future is that it does not exist. and never could-since it would have to be present. Quite another aim is pursued in speaking of future art, or more precisely of future-turned art, which is creation. It is the autonomous privilege of the creators to decide whether anything, and if so what, is to-be in art: without them, the "eternal" essence of art would yield to nothing. With reference to art of the past, what is again overlooked is the pastness of the past, its loss, the complete impossibility of viewing it as though it were just like the present. Without its

rescue by historians, art of the past would be unknowable and incommunicable. Granted that historians have to approximate past art from their present temporal location, try to conceive it as they now can; but they are not as naive as to suppose that they are dealing with it from the same point of view which belonged to those for whom that art was present. That "essence" has passed away. When past art, or past-turned art, is spoken of, it cannot be anything else but art history, re-collecting but not collecting, rationalizing but not experiencing it live. The conception of art of the present is not illegitimate, but it probably includes art which is being created now and so is not vet, as well as what in art is but recently past and so is vaguely and undemonstrably held as close enough, as if temporal distances were as simple as spatial. The minimality of the present is hard to entertain and the only fashion of making it strict with regard to art is to speak of present art from the angle of those who do experience it now, the actual public whose living turn is being-with art objects. Art recently created which no one is experiencing—in what sense is it present? Thus here the "eternal essence" of continuing intercourse can be extinguished between the burning cup offered by the creator and the disdaining lips of the public.

What has been mainly attacked in the above paragraph is the notion of something common in art above time, which is taken for granted, idealized Platonically as necessary and safe from destruction. Art of Aeschylus and Pheidias is "the same" as ours—what baseless presumption! Art must go on infinitely—what reckless optimism! What if art were to be suffocated by "necessary facts" of an inimical world, and quite soon? Art works are victoriously "imperishable"—here one does not know: is it innocence voiced or bad faith? What of all those works that have perished? Due to criticism—or worse: ignorance—or worse: brutality—or worse: fanaticism!

No eternity can be gratuitously assumed for man, nor can it be for his art. It is therefore quite a different proposition when one wishes to speak of abiding identity in art as a human quest, carried on human hands. There are relations bridging future, past and present, but they must be built up to be there, by men who are concerned with the creation, history and experience of

art. Of these a few words must now be added—for consolation or encouragement?

How an artistic object comes to be remains to a certain extent a mystery. In view of the serious treatment of creation attempted here, this is to be expected. And so not much could or should be determined about the relation of the artist to his history and experience. But in a cautious vein it can be claimed that neither the creator nor his creation begins from nothing. The artist will have had a tradition and a schooling from nature and from other men. How great is this debt to laborious historians and to those who enabled him to experience aesthetically, is not to be measured. But that such a debt is in question, that in his purely creative work he assumes something of the "same" which has been handed over to him by others, is not to be doubted, even when his work

is as toweringly his own as Shakespeare's.

The picture is clearer in case of historians, whose task out of the past is not conceivable in terms of the past only. Art historians must make a selection from near chaos. In the selection of what is to be re-membered, they will try to deal with only that which once was genuinely creative and which has been genuinely ex-perienced, providing for possible admiration. Only in those terms can they appeal to the present public and re-create a future for their objects by influencing those which are still to-be. The decisive importance of this task cannot be too strongly affirmed. Because it is up to those engaged in art history and coining its rules, to select past artists from mere artisans; present experience of the makers' products is too tentative and fluid to achieve that. It may be that because the ancient Hellenes were much less conscious of history and more cast upon present harmonies, they could speak indifferently of artists and artisans, as though these could not be told apart. The possibility of such a selective judgment seems to depend upon the objects' being covered up by the passing of time with only some of them being worthy of re-covery. Here also lies the clue to the solitude of greatness in creators who suffer in knowing themselves to be far in advance of their present public. A gap thus arises between creation and experience, the objects lapsing into the past before having a chance of being immediately present, unlike those which made less of a leap toward the future and are consequently more acces-

sible directly. The creator is thus made impotent by time and has to place his future in the hands picking through the past. He can only hope that it will be the "same" objects of his making which the historian will re-cognize as still worthy of a future. Is there a more adequate meaning of artistic "greatness" than what is found abiding with and through other men? The secret of its future then would be that it must, like a phoenix, be reborn from the ashes of its own past. Are we not so strongly inclined to believe in the "immortality" of art especially of that glory which was Hellas, precisely because it was revived from that frightful tomb of forgetting centuries between the fall of Rome and the fall of Constantinople? But no remembrance can be postulated. The historian is privileged to make his selections as one man, and so to introduce his individual failings and manias. What he does not pick is relinquished to death. What he does pick still has no guarantee of life, since his re-imposition may not be successful. The men living now may legitimately thrust the resurgent objects back into their grave through the most humanly death-like disposition: boredom.

And the present—is it neglected in this strange intimacy of "sameness" between the past and the future? But how could it be? The present is the threshold of meeting for those two: without it the future would be cut off and the past inevitably dead. Therefore only just so much needs to be said about the place of present art. Without art experience art history would be impossible, deprived of a point d'appui, and art creation would be absurd, although it could go on, pointlessly. The experience of art by living humanity, with its groping and blundering admiration, is thus not only the division between future and past, but also their bond of appeal, not always received. There is the link actualizing the identity of art in life. If only that link were more reliable! Still, temporal art cannot do without it. While therefore Croce exaggerates in his hopeful equation of the power of genius with the power of experiencing taste, and one cannot literally accept his dictum: "Homo nascitur poeta", since this implies idealistically that all human spirits are by birthright capable alike of making and experiencing art as their expression, there is a more fragile insight in Hölderlin's line: "Dichterisch wohnet der Mensch auf dieser Erde." This, on the ground of the foregoing

interpretation, can be paraphrased as: "Artistically abides man on this earth." Art abides through men living temporally in their world.

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Not only are there such external relations among the strictly incommensurable temporal phases of art, but there are phenomena describable as the offering of gifts from one phase to another. The gift of experience to history is that of familiarity, which is the enveloping aura facilitating the historian's progress. One could think that familiarity of objects remains strictly in the present, that this is what one encounters in experience more and more. This would be a mistake: familiar objects are those already surpassed and one notices them less and less; as time passes, they recede back. But men turned toward the surpassed find in them great support for communication; familiarity is in their domain a means toward revival. What history in turn presents as its offering to creation is technique. Using capacity of rules and patterns, of the reasonable order of objects, is no mean contribution to ease the creative toil. But again it must be emphasized that technique, while originating in the past, is nevertheless the property of men turned toward the future, to do with or without as they please. Technique is the means toward objects to-be. The overambitious historian who would begrudge his own gift to the artist and wish to retain it for its own sake, is ill placed in his endeavor. And finally the offer of the creator to the present experiencing public, that which is the means toward the abiding of art, is his endowment of man with vanquishing joy over life: his en-joyment.

Of joy in art experience with all its nuances, from the light welcoming smile and withheld breath to raptures of delight imposed upon the rest of existence, no words are necessary. If the author did not appreciate such enjoyment, these pages would never have been written. But for a sober counterbalance, it may not be superfluous to add something against the false view that beauty we find in art is a sheer positive acquisition with no negative side, that no payment is made for it, that it is definable as pure pleasure. This is true of no phase in art. The man who gives himself to genuine ex-perience pays, on various occasions, in various ways: with his effort toward harmony, with his envy of the artist, with regret that so little time is his for useless

spending, with the pain of being affected deep in his heart by a true revelation of his own passing existence. There is in him the historian's sense of loss of that which recedes, the Faustian impossibility of making the beautiful moment linger, the anxiety about things to come never equaling this. There is some cruelty toward the artist in imagining his hard work, his violating rule over himself in making the object come from the unreachable. There is the suffering passion toward the object which as for Kierkegaard lives by tension and uncertainty, the suspension in vacuo between imposition and opposition, the self-denying desire to get it all in, to satiate oneself, and yet to persist in appropriating rather than in complete owning of it. There is the awareness that pearls are born from pain. This is all in the context of passions of time, which the experiencing person undergoes only in a much lighter form, compared with the creator and the historian. If someone thinks that time passing is necessary and therefore the easiest thing which involves no striving, he forgets that whatever is necessary is not at all thereby made easy. That man must experience and exist in time does not mean that he does not suffer from this most universally human phenomenon. To speak of any experience and in particular of deep experience of beauty in art as of "pure" pleasure is to yield to an abstracted longing for per-fection, complete subsistence, having done with passing, an eternal ideal of non-temporality. It is but an ideal and the striving toward it, in art as elsewhere in human existence, is temporal. Thus to speak of enjoyment in art as pure is to close one's eyes entirely to the tragic horizons of humanity, and to bar that enjoyment which is tragic and thereby, as much as despite of it, is still human joy! Perhaps, far from being pure pleasure, beauty in art consists of "luminous spots created to cure the eye hurt by the onrush of night?"

Art is not eternal. This point has been elucidated repeatedly on the pages before you. Will you be greatly surprised if in conclusion the author finds nevertheless a deep-buried grain of truth in the words of Keats': "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever...?" In his trust that in such present ex-perience "its loveliness

increases?" In his joy-full confidence that "it will never pass into nothingness?" In his expression of loyalty that this is "a flowery band to bind us to the earth?" But—also in his fear that such things "always must be with us, or we die?" We shall die—but art might die before us; this we must not let happen. "Forever" is a star word for man, as remote as the night sky. The road to it is our own, and while we are on our way, we must carry the things of beauty in our reverent hands, unknowing whither and how long. This is not a luxury but a justification of our identity in time. Because: artistically abides man in this world.

Temporal is human art—temporal is human being.

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

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VICISSITUDES IN THE THEORY OF SOCIALIST REALISM*

A little lesson in history not to be ignored

There are only three distinct temporal relationships between art and theory: either the development of new events precedes theory, or both develop side by side, or theory anticipates the appearance of the new artistic current. This temporal relationship is, to some degree, fundamental in the relationship between both phenomena. If one is dealing with the first case, theories of art serve only to redress a balance. The art-theory introduces nothing in any way new; it serves only to explain an artistic process which has already flowered. At most, largely thanks to critical studies, it helps the public understand the new works unexpect-

Translated by S. Alexander.

This study is a somewhat modified part of my preliminary study published in Myst Filozoficzna (Philosophic Thought), No. 3, 1957, entitled "Against the Prophets of Catastrophe."

edly arising in the field of art, and plays the role of popularizing these new works, in the best sense of the word.

In the second case the art-theory activizes and crystallizes new artistic phenomena, defines their significance and depth, gives us the philosophical, social and historical key to them, demonstrates in which way they are new and different from those practiced hitherto, from those, that is, constituting the credo of preceding programs. In this case, theory and art develop on a par; very often the same person practices both, sometimes availing himself of the former in his creative revolution, sometimes of the latter to affirm his conceptions.

Finally, in the third case, theory becomes the dominant mode. It preaches what should be, indicates the path suitable for art to take, wherein it "is necessary" to be involved, and leads it to that path, deaf to all objections and protests. Besides, it always

manages to find a certain number of obsequious zealots.

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Evidently, this classification is somewhat simplified. Very often the cases are entangled, or one of them ends by metamorphosing itself into another. Nevertheless, one may classify them in this manner, for the history of art and the history of thought confirm these particularities. Aristotle, in his Poetics, speaks of the long historical process of development of classical tragedy and Greek comedy. Leonardo da Vinci and Dürer believed in a new art and a new esthetic theory, at the same time. Diderot and Lessing did the same thing over again two centuries later. Among others they attacked Boileau, Corneille, the Abbé D'Aubignac and Gottsched, who, fortified by Aristotle's Poetics, had set dramatic art up into a dogma. In the 16th and 17th centuries Lomazzo and Zuccari adopt a similar attitude, imposing certain canons on the plastic arts. Toward the middle of the 17th century, the French Academicians led by Le Brun, succeeded them; and in the 18th century, it was the turn of the neo-classicist Mengs. One could cite endless examples. For each generation at least one of the combinations is proposed as valid. These more or less parallel lines of the history of art and of esthetics prove that as often as art marched in the steps of artistic theory or to the same rhythm, so often did artistic theory possess positive qualities acting to stimulate artists and society. In the third case, theory—generally the result of an artistic current already out of

date—prescribed rigid rules to art and, in order to cut a figure as epigones, condemned newly created works. Such a theorydogmatic by its nature—served as a brake on the development of art, offering the public false, circumscribed, and obsolete criteria of appreciation. Often the third case occurs in connection with what is called academism. The academies were born in Italy in the 16th century and were supposed to promote discussion in the inner circles of artistic groupings. But these institutions quickly assumed a new aspect. From the end of the 16th century, they have served to set up rules-hierarchy of subjects, priority of certain formal means of expression—and to enunciate the quantum of science indispensable in order to become an artist sensu academico. Thus, these institutions transform living and fruitful art-theory into doctrine. Their merit in having given a social status to the artist ceases to have any significance whatsoever if one compares it to the wrong which they committed in setting up regulations for the creation of art. These academic doctrines were approved by the Medici, then influential in France. As soon as any doctrine became official, not only in the artistic but also in the social and political sense, it was bound to become corrupt. Besides, it's not by chance that academic doctrines had the official, cultural, and political support of absolute power. These doctrines were either openly conformist to the spirit of the court, favorable to the status quo of social life, or not very dangerous from the social point of view because of their decayed idealism and their tenacious contrivance of immutable models. It's interesting to note that the day David rebelled, in terms of his kind of classic art, against the social and political order of his time, he demolished the Academy of Paris.

There is a striking example of the corruption of esthetic doctrine: that is, the Jesuit reaction during the period of the Counter Reformation, due to the support which the social group then in power lent to the Jesuits. Academic doctrine had merely issued decrees; esthetic doctrine, politically dependent, went to the point of interdiction. Academic doctrine pretended that it alone possessed the privilege of truth; politically-dependent es-

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¹ See N. Pevsner, Academies of Art. Past and Present, Cambridge, 1940.

thetic doctrine made of this truth an inviolable tabu. Academic doctrine punished art which departed from imposed canons, by subjecting it to scorn; politically-dependent esthetic doctrine threatened, in similar cases, direct or indirect reprisals. It is, therefore, a phenomenon which has much more to do with the police than with culture. The Council of Trent ordered the unleashing of a merciless battle against heretical art; from then

on, painting depended strictly on the Holy Scriptures.

Does all theory end in time by becoming distorted and changing into a doctrine? Does all corruption of theory derive from the fact that it depends on political power? It is very dangerous to reply here, ex promptu, to questions that should be examined under all their historical and national aspects. Nevertheless, it remains true that the history of artistic and esthetic ideas—let us cite, for example, the History of the Criticism of Art, by Venturi and the History of Aesthetics, by K. Gilbert and H. Kuhn-lead us to the conclusion that all art-theories allow themselves gradually to be overtaken by indoctrinization, and that there was corruption, whenever there appeared the more or less despotic domination of a privileged social group.

The acceptance of Renaissance art-theories by the school of Mannerism and the Jesuit Counter Reformation would seem to indicate that doctrine does not always compromise the principles of the theory of art. An art-theory might be correct, but one may derive a doctrine from it which is no more than a lot of

unjustifiable and false directives.

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Contrary to the general notion, the number of esthetic solutions is limited. All theories may be summed up in a few essential and opposed theses. We already find them among the pre-Socratics. The Beautiful representing the order of things in the cosmos. The Beautiful representing the inner order in an artistic work, and the Beautiful which is the reflection of reality in a work. The Beautiful perceived by the intellect and the Beautiful as the pleasure of the senses. Creation born of inspiration and creation which is the child of skill (techne). The artistic theory of the Renaissance once again takes up Aristotle's conception: transmitting it, enriched, to Diderot, Lessing and Herder; then, these theories lead through diverse 19th century esthetic currents—romanticism, critical realism, naturalismtoward the conception of socialist realism. The esthetic theory of the Renaissance correctly demonstrates that artistic methods are methods of research; art requires technical competence as well as imagination and knowledge; there is nothing which should not interest the artist; art is as agreeable in terms of sensation and emotion, for him who creates it as for him who perceives it; to be an artist is to plunge oneself into the quest for truth, and to work toward the establishment of laws of taste and esthetics; there is no beautiful work lacking an inner harmony of all its components.

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You will tell me that these are generalizations without any deep foundation. So foundationless, indeed, that one might just as readily proclaim and demonstrate their converse. Yes, one might, and history teaches us that arguments of this sort have often been used. But it is necessary to check the correctness of these esthetic principles according to other criteria; not taking into consideration the distortions resulting from corruption, but considering what made them fruitful, that is to say, the works of art which gave life to the esthetic under examination, and comparing it with the arguments of the opposed esthetic.

Thus, there are always two tendencies present in the history of esthetics. Art-theory goes ahead, modifying en route and enrichening its results with rational examination of art. Continually reflecting concrete circumstances, it emphasizes, new discoveries in art, discoveries of a scientific, esthetic, and social nature, interlinked one with the other. But after a while, theory coagulates into doctrine. Its principles slough off as catechisms; instead of guiding art, it orders it. In this doctrinaire incarnation, theory begins to resemble those "estheticizing" moralizing concepts—which are opposed to it—and which confuse art with science.

Some further words on the subject of the corruption of arttheory in the situation where there is social, and directly political subjection. Corruption is a less regular occurrence than metamorphosis into doctrine.² For there must be a focussing of external circumstances which impose this theory, declaring it to

² S. Ossowski has observed this phenomenon: Socjologia sztuki, Warsaw, 1936, p. 31.

be the *only* valid one; then the punishment of ostracism is applied, or, in cases of insubordination, physical means; all these postulates and prohibitions issue from an Institution, and the rank of being the loftiest connoisseurs of art is accorded to bureaucrats.

COULD "SOTSREALIZM" BE AN INVENTION OF THE DEVIL?

A little excursion into the land of esthetic thought permits us to view social realism in another light than that of the polemicists who have had the word up to now. Socialist realism is part of the best artistic and theoretical inheritance of the past, despite all the distortions which recent historical circumstances have forced it to undergo. At its origin there had been a new art. This art was nourished upon new social, political and cultural ideas. It responded to questions, and moved in the forefront of the needs and aspirations which life, and not intellectual speculation, was engendering. Then, as the new works were born, they were analysed and confronted with those of preceding epochs, and thus a new esthetic theory crystallized. This theory does not outrun artistic facts, it is the balance sheet of what already exists. Why should one judge Gorki from the point of view of 1956? The historical truth was altogether different. Gorki's theoretical attempts were much closer to those of Da Vinci, Dürer, Diderot, or Lessing than to those of the defenders of a lying and toadving art.

Everyone interested in the subject knows that magnificent artistic works were created before 1934 and that the USSR was at that time the inspirer of new experiments into form and content. Those who connect the birth of socialist realism with the year 1934 have no respect for the current of history. First of all, the artistic aspect was already under way much earlier. There are those who would even place it in the epoch when Gorki's Mother appeared. Secondly, the theoretical aspect, although only formulated at the time of the first Congress of Soviet Writers, also dates back to the earliest years of the So-

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Thus, that argument is false, which would have it that it's possible to determine whether the theory of socialist realism is a good or bad line, according to the artistic products following its proclamation. What it must do is exactly the opposite. In order to know whether a theory is correct, one must confront it with the creative works which have determined these esthetic pronouncements; and in this particular case, there are universally-

recognized masterpieces.

One might refuse to apply the name of socialist realism to the creative work of this period. There are those who propose other terminology; art of the socialist epoch, socialist art. But it's not only a case of quarreling over terms. The onus probandi that socialist realism is not an adequate term falls upon the adversaries and not the partisans of the expression. What do the adversaries tell us? They admit that socialist realism, in its initial conception, and not after its bureaucratic corruption, is not a style and should not have been defined as such. Thus, this realism did not preach any pre-fabricated poetics. Today it is often reproached with having been taken as a "creative method." Such a method would lead by detours to a stylistic norm, to rules concerning the construction of a work; a certain norm of interpretation would be imposed; that is to say, a way of seeing, of understanding, of appreciating things, conforming to historical and dialectical materialism, according to the last version given to it.

On the other hand, the opinion according to which realism³ is, above all, an attitude toward reality is justified, although not demonstrated in precise analysis. Certain thinkers interpret the term in this way. Thus, S. Ossowski declares that there is realism everywhere "where there is a search for artistic values on the plane of correlation between the work and the object represented." (U podstaw estetyki [The Foundations of Esthetics], Warsaw, 1949, p. 114). Ossowski's realism is provided with

³ This idea possesses multiple meanings. Given its varied history and given the fact that it may be applied to various areas of art, a special study would be required here. See my article "Is It a Question of Facts or Words," published in *Studia Filozoficzne*, No. 4/7, 1958. At the International Congress on Esthetics (Athens, 1960), I presented a paper on *Réalisme comme catégorie artistique*; I tried in this paper to define "realism" with more precision.

cognitive values. R. Ingarden emphasizes the same thing, although indirectly, through an analysis of the various ways of apprehending the veracity of a work (see *Szkice z filozofii literatury* [Essays on the Philosophy of Literature], Lodz, 1947,

pp. 95-117).

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In 1917, new social conditions arose and, with them, the life of man was completely changed, as well as his way of being, thinking, feeling, wanting. Other relationships among people were born, other problems took on importance, other ideas were formed. A new social ontology determined a new philosophical, scientific, and artistic epistomology. The artist synthesized these into a historical verity which was the essence, at the same time of his own individual quality. He shared this characteristic with his contemporaries, for they also thought and wanted the same things, or almost the same things, as he. The term "realism," therefore, deserves to be kept for other reasons than that of tradition. It is the counterpart of the realism of past centuries, a realism which was quite as engagé as that of Gorki, Sholokov, Maiakovsky, Eisenstein, Poudovkin, Vakhtangov, Deni, Moor, Deïneko, Pimenov, Pietrov-Vodkin, Grabar, during the twenty years of socialist reality. One might search for another name for their creative work but I doubt that a better one could be found than that which they shaped themselves, and which subsequently, was so unworthily compromised and slandered. For the essential question is not: "Is the name correct?" but: "Does there exist a group of common factors in the best creative work of this epoch, and does this group of common factors distinguish this creative work from that preceding it?" In my judgment one can respond to the second question in the affirmative.

Before the thirties an open struggle between different artistic trends wen on in the USSR. There were those who defended the out-of-date pre-revolutionary positions. The majority, however, were in favor of a new reality and expressed their support in

various ways.

One may find rational ideas and ideals just as much in the unilateral efforts of the *Proletkult*, of D. Viertiev, of the Fexy, of Meyerhold's and Vakhtangov's theatre, of the groups of "The Four Arts" and "Ost" painters, as in the despotic plans of the

RAPP. These ideas and ideals led, sometimes describing many zigzags, to the birth of masterpieces of socialist realism. Although different artistic groups fought with each other, they all rested on the foresight that the creation of an ideological and revolutionary art was indispensable. The awareness of poverty. famine, toil, is everywhere present, as well as pride in the victory won at the Winter Palace. Then there was the heroism of those who had been the first to build a new world, alone and besieged, but convinced that they would soon succeed in enrolling all humanity on the same path. The new hero of the time was the popular masses; the problem of work came to be placed in the forefront. Some wanted to create a new plastic art in the factories, to popularize the sense of beauty in the streets and workshops, others were fascinated with easel painting and its sometimes lyrical, sometimes epical, modes of expression; but the arguments of both camps reckoned with, and on, a new public. It's notable that the new experiments in form in the USSR during the first ten years after the revolution were always supported by social and political arguments. Their authors wanted these experiments to serve the revolution better, reflecting its essence and ending in radical transformation of taste in esthetic matters. Evidently, it would be absurd to assert that all the works created during this period in the USSR were realistic in the sense that the word "realism" was given toward 1932-34. Nevertheless, diverse artistic currents, the cult of the machine—the beauty of construction—the cult of the social masses, the cult of politics-as-the-guide-of-art, were fused into works which will last in the history of art: Maiakovsky's poems, Potemkin, Storm over Asia, Quiet Flows the Don, Cement, Forward, Liubov Iarovaia, posters by Deni and Moor, graphic art by Favorski and D. Shterenberg, revolutionary painting by Deïneka and Pietrov-Vodkin, sculpture by Shervoude, Shadre and Moukhina. I have no intention of listing here the aspects of realism which allow us to call it "socialist." Undoubtedly, we are dealing with a group of aspects which might be extended, and hence cannot be set up in arithmetical tables. The features which I have mentioned above suffice, it seems to me; they may all be found, although visibile in different degrees and in a different context, in the

Soviet works of the epoch of shock. Socialist realism was not an invention of the devil, serving to annihilate artists who claimed their right to benefit from the most elementary kind of independence. It was a product of life, the reflection of the truth expressed in a thousand ways, often subject to exaggeration—there were as many manners as searchers, or groups of searchers, and their vision and form were always so contrived as to best satisfy the millions of people who were opening their eyes to contemplate art.

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To study the formation of the theory of socialist realism, one can, for example, depend on a mass of sources, namely, the collection of documents concerning Soviet plastic arts in the vears 1917-32 (Sovietskoïe iskustvo za 15 liet. Materialy i dokumientatsia pod riedaktsiyeï, I. Matsa, L. Reinhardt and L. Rempel, under the direction of I. Matsa, Moscow-Leningrad, 1933). The first decade of the history of Soviet plastic arts is there traced out in its main lines; one may find it in the manifestoes of artistic groups, in events presiding over the birth of these groups, their development and decline, information about exhibitions and art-instruction. The outline of the following years is much more superficial. Besides, the work is not lacking in lacunae even with regard to the first years. Nonetheless, it constitutes a very rich vein of authentic facts. The editor of the book, Ivan Matsa, although an eminent art critic, contents himself with a very modest contribution; he prefers to present the picture of the time in brief introductions to each of the theree parts of the work.

After analysing the materials presented in this book, one

is led to the following conclusions.

First, this period of Soviet art was always accompanied by theoretical reflections, that is to say, each group sought to justify its practice with a program.

⁴ The problem of collectivity and of employment is also found in non-socialist literature, but these problems have no cardinal meaning for the hero and his attitude, for they begin to count really only in a socialist regime; then, the position that one takes vis-à-vis these problems becomes the social and moral criteria by which every individual is judged.

Second, the program of socialist realism was present from the twenties on although it had not yet been defined by that term—one spoke of revolutionary realism or proletarian realism. Such groups as Novaïa Organizatsia Jivopistsov, Krug Khudojnikov, O.M.C.H., O.S.T., Oktiabr, who had been partisans of easel painting and monumental frescoes put these ideas into practice. Even if the said program was not fully realized, it was preached.

Third, the A.C.H.R.R., a group continuing the traditions of the pieriedvijniki, also made use of these ideas (heroic realism);

their interpretation, therefore, was very flexible.

Fourth, these ideas were not utilized when it was a question of applied art (with the exception of the R.A.P.C.H.) for it was believed, very correctly, that these ideas were as strong as their subject only in the following circumstance: art representing

reality.

Fifth, the theory of socialist realism such as it was understood in 1934 took up again ideas which had been promulgated from before the birth of the R.A.P.C.H., that is to say, conceptions preached by the *poputchiki* of the *Oktiabr* groups, *O.S.T.* and *O.M.C.H.* The most varied, often contradictory elements,—on one hand, the doctrine of communicative quality and on the other, the doctrine of continuous formal experimentation—enter into this theory, put forward, besides, after the defeat of sectarianism. Without being the proclamation of a new era, this theory constituted, nonetheless, the balance-sheet of fifteen years of bitter disputes over the determination of wath proletarian art should be.

The arguments and artistic programs offered in this collection prove that well before 1934 the necessity and interpretation of these ideas were being taken into account. The theory of socialist realism was formed—as the facts testify—gradually, parallel with the irregular development of Soviet art during the first fifteen years of its existense. These historical facts prove, besides, the weaknesses of this theory; the term was borrowed from literary theory and could not be extended to all domains of art.

Furthermore, it is untrue to say that the Zhdanov theses (1934) were codified. They only represented a generalization of the same kind as the theoretical generalizations of the twenties.

They were so lacking in precision that the "oktiabrists" and the O.S.T. would have been able to subscribe to all of them. The codification of these theses into a closed system took place much later; for the plastic arts only in 1945.

GORKI AND ZHDANOV - 1934.

Gradually, as art developed, the theory of socialist realism grew. Most recently, there has cropped up among us the habit of contrasting the Leninist epoch with the Stalinist epoch. Evidently, fundamental differences exist between these two periods, necessitating an examination of their divergences. We shall come back to that later. For the moment, let us concern ourselves with the first of these periods and the First Congress of Soviet Writers, and just to anticipate certain premature conclusions, I would immediately like to indicate what are the principles of Lenin's cultural politics which led to the definition of the theory of socialist realism. The corruption of this theory into an administrative formula was conditioned by the epoch which followed; and this theory in its new form was almost entirely in contradiction with Lenin's esthetic theses.

During the years 1917-1924 Lenin, although overwhelmingly involved in political, social, and economic problems, very often expressed his opinion with regard to cultural matters, and indicated what, according to him, the perspectives of culture should be. What above all did Lenin aim for? For the popularization of culture. That is why he attacked the adepts of the Proletkult who were ignorant of the cultural heritage of the past. That is why he emphasized several times that the proletariat, unlike the Roman plebs, did not want "games" but a serious art, in the best sense of the word. That is also why Lenin demanded an art that could be understood by the masses. The sympathy which Lenin felt, on the one hand, for literature like that by Gorki and Barbusse, and on the other hand, for the then-famous plan of "monumental propaganda," is another reflection of the propositions which he maintained. We know from letters sent by Lenin to Clara Zetkin that he neither understood nor loved contemporary art. Lunacharsky, an art critic very

sensitive to literature and a connoisseur of all the new artistic currents of his time, defended the ideals of the avant-garde and thus very often laid himself open to sometimes venomous debates with Lenin. One need only take cognizance of Lunacharsky's works to realize that, despite the often very serious tone of these polemics with Lenin, he was defending exactly the same esthetic principles.⁶ During the years 1926-1929, he was Commissar of Education, conceiving of himself as the executor and continuator of Lenin's postulates. I don't believe that his views could have sprung from the official position he occupied. On the contrary, I am certain that his opinions were the result of reflection and the personal debates which he was in the habit of having with himself. In his article entitled "The Cultural Tasks Which the Working Class Must Assume" (1918), he again takes up Lenin's ideas. Here briefly is the reasoning: A proletarian culture exists. It results, and will continue to result, from the creation of those among the artists who are involved in the revolution and the building of socialism. Their art is an art of struggle and soon it will be practiced by workers and peasants who will begin to narrate their experiences as Gorki and Alexander Nexo have done. Lunacharsky wrote a characteristic article, "Art and Industry" (1924), in which he spoke of the esthetic pleasure which clothing, furniture, dwellings, machines, the look of streets give us. He dreamt of a world soon to come in which two brothers. one an artist-technician and the other a technician-artist, would create the necessary conditions to revolutionize esthetics. That was an idea in the Marxist tradition which J. Marshlovsky had proclaimed before him; in the first years after the October Revolution it was very popular amongst the Soviet intelligentsia. The plastic arts were to influence the surrounding world, organize space in the widest sense of that word, co-exist with man in his every day life and turn esthetics topsy turvy. Lunacharsky was, therefore, in favor of those who today are for contemporaneity, and above all seek to give art an applied character. Lunacharsky

⁵ J. S. Smirnov, Iz istorii stroitielstva sotsialisticheskoi kultury piervyi pieriod sovietskoi vlasti, Moscow, 1952; P. I. Liebiediev, Sovietskoie iskusstvo v pieriod innostronnoi voiennoi intiervientsii i grajdanskoi voiny, Moscow, 1949.

⁶ See Statii ob iskusstvie, Moscow-Leningrad, 1941.

equally approved of the A.C.H.R.R., group; he was, that is, for applied, pictorial and sculptural art and not traditional "autonomous" art; he was for art in direct relationship with architecture. It is notable that the artists of the Cézannist group Valet Karo and those of "The Four Arts" group passed on into the A.C.H.R.R. group, without the least pressure having been exercised upon them. The A.C.H.R.R. group could count on Lunacharsky's favor because its followers were creating a revolutionary art, an art of the moment, comprehensible to the public and very popular. In the article "On the Value of Formal Art" (1926), Lunacharsky disavows academic "epigonism" as much as cultivated decadent art. The author recognizes the formalistic value of experimental art, but he asserts that, under the circumstances, it is possible to amaze people without being able to satisfy them. However, above all, the hunger of the contemporary public must be appeased; and appeased with new nutriments. Furthermore, before the new forms for the new basis of things appear, "it would be better to make use of Turgenev's and Pushkin's classic language rather than an indecipherable language." Such were the opinions of a man who made war with Lenin to defend the rights of art and the right of formalistic experimentation, the man who popularized expressionism, cubism, futurism and purism, in his writings; and demanded, in 1926, in a fine speech entitled Let Us Be Careful Vis-à-Vis Art that one should not reject, in the name of the esthetic level then existing among the masses, difficult works of art which perhaps in a dozen years would be comprehensible and easily available to everybody.

It seems to me that Gorki's opinions were not as far from Lunacharsky's as our press of the years 1956-57 would have us believe. It is true that Gorki abjured all west-European contemporary art and literature whose single preoccupation was to search for new means of expression. It is true that, according to him, popular art above all should inspire proletarian art. But what is more important is that Lunacharsky's opinions like Gorki's, seem to have led to the 1934 formulas. Some of Gorki's esthetic opinions had been formed before the 1917 revolution. In 1909, in a study entitled "The Annihilation of the Individual," he contrasted the optimism and sense of collectivity stimulated by folk-literature, as against the lost solitary decadent in the

works of Sologube, Archibashev, and Kuprim, If he proposed folklore literature as a model it is because he found it optimistic. healthy and moral, speaking the same language as the masses, expressing the same thoughts and sentiments. It was not a question of mechanically imitating the style but adopting a similar moral attitude. In 1911 (The Self-Taught) and in 1914 (Introduction to the Works of Proletarian Writers), Gorki emphasized that literature must represent the truth of life and that best able to represent this truth were those writers rising out of the formerly-oppressed classes. Many of Gorki's post-revolutionary speeches already foreshadow his 1934 report. I will cite only the most important. In 1928 he wrote in his article "On the Proletarian Writer" that the new art must poeticize collective work, take cognizance of the fact that man is capable of the most beautiful deeds and that he can influence the flow of history, inspiring it with the most beautiful human ideals. The same year he declared in an article entitled "How I Learned to Write" that romanticism was no more than a simple reaction against realism on the part of those who saw life in the large; that is to say, those who saw man, how he desired to live, and what his ideals were. In 1933, in an article entitled "On Socialist Realism," Gorki compared bourgeois literature, dominated by selfishness, quest of material pleasures, the war of all against all, with humanist literature where man is ready to renounce his small personal happiness for the common good, to create social well-being, to prefer it to his daily personal comfort, to co-exist with others on the basis of rational and cordial friendship.

Was that the universal opinion? No. Was that, then, Gorki's personal opinion? Not even that. Gorki was expressing in his articles the esthetic opinions of the majority of Soviet artists. These opinions were born of tempestuous discussions over a period of more than ten years, which had always resulted in bringing up the same question: "What must the art of our epoch be, and does existing art truly correspond to contemporary

needs?"

In 1934 Gorki and Zhdanov drew up the balance-sheet of this discussion. Let us here recall the key ideas of their reports.

Gorki: "Myth is an invention. To invent means to extract the essence out of any given combination and transpose it into an image. In this way realism is born...If to this essence one adds, following the logic of hypothesis, what one would like to see achieved, and introduces it into the created image, then one obtains romanticism, which is the foundation of myth and is very useful for its revolutionary effect on reality..."

"Work must be the principal hero of our books. It is that which must fashion man and shape him to the demands of modern technique...We must learn to treat work as a creative

art."

"Socialist realism claims that to live is to act, to create, to continually develop in man his most personal gifts in order that he may conquer over natural forces...to assure his happiness on earth..."

Zhdanov: "...The line must be well-known in order to be able to honestly represent it in literary works—not in a scholastic, superficial manner, not in the style of objective reality; it is necessary to represent reality in its process of revolutionary evolution...That is precisely the method, in literature, and in literary criticism, which we call the method of socialist realism."

"...Yes, Soviet literature is tendentious..."

"...To be an engineer of human souls is to have one's feet solidly riveted to the soil of reality...Our literature is firmly set on the hard ground of materialism, but romanticism is not beyond its ken; only, it is a question of a romanticism of a new type, revolutionary romanticism.

"...You have a choice of weapons. Soviet literature is able to make use of all kinds of weapons—forms, styles and methods of artistic creation—to exploit their diversity and the richness

of their forms."8

In my opinion one may group the above quotations under three cardinal propositions:

1) Contemporary life in all its forms constitutes the subject of art. To certify to the truth—that is the artist's role. Artistic truths are always a personal characteristic; consequently

⁷ On Literature, Warsaw, 1951, pp. 26, 39 and 54.

⁸ Speech on Literature and Art, Warsaw, 1954, pp. 8, 9.

they must result from individual discoveries. Truth is tendentious because reality is tendentious. Within it, past and future stand face to face. The artist is obliged to choose. Zola already knew that, he who wished to be a passive chronicler; but in order to take an honest account of events, he had to speak out for socialism. In synthesizing facts the artist arrives at the truth. He can either estimate existing reality or involve himself in the future by detecting new phenomena. The model man is not a pure invention of the theory of socialist realism. But, at present, he is still a rare social occurrence.

- 2) Engagé art admits of expressive means which best suit the artist. If realism has something to suggest in this specific case, it is that this form be the best and most efficacious from the esthetic point of view.
- 3) An art fulfilling conditions 1 and 2 has a positive moral effect. This effect is not without importance because art can help understand life better and help one to live better.

It seems to me that I have not abused my rights of interpretation in the above exposition. And if it be true that one may derive such ideas from Gorki's and Zhdanov's reports, these reports are completely acceptable. They take up again the excellent esthetic tradition extending from Aristotle, through the theoreticians of the Renaissance and those of the Illuminists, to the Russian revolutionary democrats. Whoever might consider this esthetic tradition bad, will nevertheless concede that this esthetic reappears with implacable regularity at every decisive turning point in history, every time new social principles manifest themselves. It is, therefore, an esthetic which also marks our epoch. I will not deny that the main ideas of this esthetic are presented in generalities. It is that which gives them their strenght and their weakness. Today we know it is the weakness which has taken over.

⁹ That is to say, show man as he is—Euripides—or as he should be—Sophocles—according to Aristotle's definitions in his Poetics.

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The First Congress of Soviet Writers had put an end once and for all with the principle, "friends or enemies," that is to say, with the orthodox fashion of dividing writers into Marxists and non-Marxists, with the practice of putting art and political ideology on the same level, and stifling any breath of criticism which might be held reprehensible in the USSR. 10 However, some of Zhdanov's formulations in his report made it already possible to foresee that those who thought of reacting would run into difficulties. Zhdanov pushed forward the proposition that Soviet literature possessed an avant-garde quality because it was engendered in an avant-garde society. This thesis was false: it put in question the law of the irregular development of art and society which Marx had earlier predicted. In the name of this thesis Revai "demonstrated" in a well known discussion during 1950-51 that Lukacs was not a Marxist esthetician. This thesis would have it that not only was Soviet literature automatically better than the classic literature of past centuries, but also that contemporary bourgeois literature was decadent and deprived of all value. Therein lay theoretical over-simplifications which led to dangerous practical consequences. A bulkhead watertight to any penetration of the art practiced in Western Europe and the United States, a state of suspicion and permanent scorn with regard to whatever came from beyond our camp, served only to diminish socialist culture. Furthermore, Zhdanov formulated his ideas in a tone which rendered them decrees. Not only did he speak of what was but also of what should be. A theory of art which goes from description and synthesis to the setting up of norms supported by terms like "must" and "necessary," is grazing the abyss. From this one arrives quickly at the command: "Here is what is permitted and here is what is forbidden."

But in 1934 these elements were not as dangerous as they were to become later. The evolution of socialist realism toward its "institutional" version was gradual. A date which might serve as a point of departure for this "institutional" version is

¹⁰ See Stalin's early letters to Bill Bielotserkiewski (1929), to Bezimienski and Gorki (1930).

the year 1936. To be concrete, I would say that this point of departure was marked by the article published in January in Pravda which had as its title: "A Chaos of Sounds Instead of Music." Subject of this article was Shostakovich's opera, Lady Macbeth of Mzensk. What strikes us in this article? It is that instead of entering into a discussion with the artist, an anathema permitting of no appeal, is pronounced against him. The principles of realism, applicable to the figurative arts, were applied to music without the least foundation. It was declaring officially that socialist realism was the only legal artistic current in the Soviet Union. A limited group of people were granted the privilege of deciding what was good or bad in art. This little group had conferred upon it the right to represent the esthetic opinions of the entire nation. Nothing astonishing, therefore, that Zhdanov should have referred to the above-said article in Pravda at a conference of Soviet musicologists held in 1948 under the auspices of the Central Committee of the Party. The year 1948 was the epilogue of what had begun twelve years earlier.

Lenin had mentioned in his writings the possible intervention of the Party in matters of art, but he never spoke about forbidding experimental art. Lenin had as much confidence in artists as in the mass of the people. He lent confidence to them because he believed in the irresistible force of socialism. He believed in life. Lenin wrote that one could not be independent of society but that the socialist regime would permit artists to choose freely. In Lenin's time socialist realism was not the only current, but one among a number of other artistic currents. Lunacharsky defined Lenin's politics vis-à-vis art in the 1926 article mentioned above, in which he recommends behaving with prudence every time it's a question of deciding on the value of a work of art. In another article written in 1918 entitled: "On the Freedom of Creation in a Socialist Regime," Lunacharsky gave the impression that the artist will be free as a bird. This derived from his conviction that artists, aware of society's new needs, deeply involved in the new life, will abandon intimacy, "everything which is secret, interior, personal, untranslatable into any language," for rational clear art marked with personal sentiments but dedicated to the common cause. He knew at the same time,

to his great regret, that certain creative artists would find it very difficult to set themselves upon the path of socialist art. His article ended with these words: "Before reaching the socialist paradise, perhaps we shall have to rest for some very bitter time

yet in purgatory."

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The main documents of the Zhdanov's period—the brochure containing Zhdanov's speeches and the resolutions of the Central Committee of the Party concerning literature and art from 1946-48—prove that Lenin's directives had been abandoned. Ideological art became synonymous with making propaganda for everything good, while omitting to mention anything else. Even if Zoshtchenko's and Akhmatova's writings deserved to be severely criticized, it should have been possible all the same to tolerate their existence. The main current—the works of Simenov, Fadieiev, Ehrenburg, Kazakievitch, Tvardovski, Inber, etc.,—should have been able to go along with different types of creative work. But no, Zhdanov would not permit any tolerance. He introduced and sanctioned the principle of monopoly around a single official idea. Muradeli's opera, The Great Friendship was a pretext to silence what was called the "formalist coterie." Suddenly it was learned that it was forbidden to practice modern art because it was addressed only to the élite. Here are the formal models which became de rigueur in Soviet art: the mogutchaïa kutchka in music, the pieredviznitsky in painting, Tolstoi and Chekov in literature. Although it was not maintained that one must comply with the ideological principles underlying 19th century creative works, the artistic language of that time was openly imposed, under the pretext that it was the only language which could be understood by the masses. And what is even better, whoever defended different opinions in art was accused of subversive political activity. Zhdanov spoke as a dictator in 1948. He used epithets instead of resorting to arguments.

Thus the principles of socialist realism were transformed into their opposite. The doctrine of truth became a doctrine of Byzantine prostrations before inviolable commandments of the highest authorities. One had the right to see what was good and to dream how that might become better still, but it was expressedly forbidden to take notice of what wasn't going well.

Thus literature and art, seeking to avoid whatever couldn't be

praised, lacked truth.

The theory of diversity of genres, styles, forms was changed into a theory that served as apologist for a single style. "Epigonism" was openly cultivated. Art was conceived of in an academic conservative manner. Experiments in new forms were looked upon as diabolical inventions since they were carried on by contemporary bourgeois artists, damned by definition.

Finally, the theory of the moral influence of art was replaced by the theory of the submission of artistic ideas to political aims of propaganda and agitation. There was no question of culture

but of the politically-extolled social cult.

This doctrine—let us call it Zhdanovism—did not admit of any other esthetic interpretation. Its activity was not limited to the field of culture. Politics supported it and thus it menaced recalcitrants not only by barring their road to glory but furthermore subjecting them to repressions. Every artist had his controller; an institution charged with seeing to it that the artist did not make any "false steps." Thus, there were factional specialists in publishing houses, editorial boards and agencies to guide the steps of the creative artist, pointing out the right road—and the risky spots—to him. An entire hierarchy of esthetic overseers was formed. Everybody, from the critics to those representing the final court of appeal, helped turn the administrative mills. Every theoretician furthermore, had his supertheoretician and every critic his super-critic.

THE ROOTS OF CORRUPTION

I would distinguish two sources for the corruption of the theory of socialist realism: heteronomous and autonomous. The first led to the events so many times discussed since the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The second deals with laws immanent in the development of esthetic theories. These causes were not independent of each other. For Zhdanovian theories to achieve such power, both causes had to act simultaneously.

As for the external causes, here are those which directly contributed to the corruption of Zhdanovian doctrine:

1) the conception of socialism as built and already achieved, impeccable and without fault;

2) the conception of the intensification of the class

struggle;

3) art and literature conceived in the same manner as politics. Zhdanov's conception of socialist realism already achieved (see the speeches delivered in 1934) would imply that there also existed an already achieved and immutable esthetic model. The ideally beautiful world called for realism in literature and art...Platonic realism. Alleging the idea of the intensification of the class struggle as a pretext, art-alien-to-the-socialist-camp was calumniated; those carrying on experiments in our camp were distrusted; a cleavage had been brought about between Soviet culture and the rest of contemporary culture. This doctrine was no less Platonic than the preceding for it substituted for the enemy who could be recognized, a frightful enemy, completely invented from head to foot. Finally, the last of these ideas debased art and science to the level of ancillae politicae which implied the same discipline toward authority, the same duties, the same tactic, the same elasticity in abandoning former positions to occupy new ones, the same criteria of judgment as in political questions.

And what are the immanent causes of corruption? I've already written, in first dealing with this subject, that art theories tend, in their natural evolution, to gravitate toward doctrinarism. But in the case of socialist realism, this would not have been able to have occurred so quickly, and in such a way, without the intervention of external factors. It is these external factors which recur to play the principal role in the metamorphosis of the theory of socialist realism into doctrine. And it is also to these external factors that one must attribute the resemblance of this doctrine to the Jesuit Counter Reformation. I seem to discern another cause: an immanent cause, which activated this transformation into doctrine; that is, having founded the entire esthetic system on the *priority of the educational function of art.*

According to the 1934 definition the educative influence of a work of art must spring from its veracity and its beauty *stricto* sensu. But this theory was formulated in so imprecise a way that

it was easy to reverse it.

Here is the reasoning which one finds in Gorki and more precisely in Zhdanov: it is important to educate our public because truth and beauty belong to it. But the artist is not the one to decide the aspect of this truth and this beauty: that belongs to the examining group acting in the name of the people. How could this problem have been created, despite the elementary esthetic principle, repeated for dozens of years, and which one might formulate as follows: "to pronounce the truth in as beautiful a form as possible?" The order of things was reversed; here is the principle which became important: to educate by

means of art in as communicative a way as possible.

It's not a question here of a conscious plot on the part of the enemies of socialist culture; nor even a plot on the part of high functionaries with limited ideas who did not understand that the truth of beauty and the beauty of truth always have something to teach and that one could shape the public by such means as well as by means of ugliness and lies. Here are the real causes of this state of things: first, the fear of unveiling the entire social and political truth, and also the assumption that art could influence thoughts, sentiments and public action in an efficacious, immediate and lasting way. Second, the fear that honest art, irrestistibly borne toward discovery, in subject as well as in form, will remain incomprehensible to the masses. The first of these causes is entirely external. The difficult conditions in which socialism was being built provoked continual tension. It was a matter of not discouraging, of not inspiring distrust and doubt. Art was made use of, among other things, to attain this goal. The fear of being criticised with regard to what this might be, engendered political terror. Third, it was dreaded that the heap of small stones would unleash an avalanche. These fears were not the only ones. What was dreaded besides was that the masses, so lacking in culture, were not capable themselves of distinguishing good from evil and beauty from ugliness. And so we come to the second of the above mentioned causes. The masses aspired to a communicative art and the artist tended to create a difficult art. The masses had to accomplish a veritable leap across the centuries in order to reach the twentieth century. The artists themselves were inevitably searching for new forms. seeking to express themselves in a new language. This conflict

between the avant-garde tendencies of artists and the back-wardness of the public is permanent in history. But it never attained so *dramatic* a character as under the socialist conditions in the USSR. There the masses were particularly backward and the artists, finally free to devote themselves unconstrainedly to the search for new forms, made ill use of their experimental practice.

Lenin was aware of this conflict and he defended the masses: he demanded that art be modern and comprehensible at the same time. Lunacharsky struggled with the same problem. Sometimes he tried to cut the dilemma by giving satisfaction to both parties, at other times, he followed in Lenin's tracks. In his article on Derain (1927), despite his great admiration for the artist, he expressed some reservations with regard to the modernism of his work because he found it deprived of revolutionary elements and not very "available." According to Lunacharsky, in order to be understood by the masses one must make use of the language of classical forms, the language used by Michelangelo, Tintoretto, Rubens, Before him, Gorki had condemned Dostoevski in the name of the priority of the educative function of art. Zhdanov, at the time of his attacks against Zoshtchenko and Akhmatova, declared that art which is content with criticising cannot be pedagogical. He refused his approval to the "formalist" group of Shostakovich because, he said, they committed the sin of false originality. Genial music, he affirmed, is always accessible to everybody at the first hearing. The "formalists" were writing degenerate music because it was strange to the Soviet people and difficult to understand.

From Lunacharsky to Zhdanov, therefore, the same arguments repeat themselves, and that which gave birth to them is a genuine social conflict. This conflict was sharply indicated in the speeches made by Mao Tse-tung at the time of the Congress of Writers and Artists held in Yenan on the 2nd of May 1942. There we may read that the only criteria to be kept in view is the culture of the workers, peasants and soldiers. The author maintains that in interpreting life and truth in artistic language one must, above all, take account of the audience for which it

¹¹ Duties of the Artist and Writer, Warsaw, 1956, p. 28.

Notes and Discussion

is destined. Mao Tse-tung distinguishes two types of artistic recreation, one very easy and the other more difficult. But he declares that our duty above all is to popularize art and not to elevate it excessively. He openly declares himself for *utilitarianism* (p. 35), for according to him the value of a work is measured above all in terms of the public interest which it awakens. And then he resolutely sets *political* criteria above *esthetic* criteria (p. 42).

THE PARTY AND THE ARTISTS

The thesis of the priority of the educational function of the art work is bolstered by the thesis of the directing role of the Party in the field of art; and, reciprocally, the direction of the Party seems that much more indispensable in the field of art to the degree that artists are aware of fulfilling ideological functions. The Party "defends" the masses against an art which does not choose to be communicative, and guides the artists so that they should not lose contact with the masses and should confront more important problems, those most useful from a social point of view.¹³

None of these doctrines, all closely interconnected, seem correct to me. I understand party direction with regard to art in an entirely different way. The priority of the pedagogical function strikes me as deadly to any rational esthetics. If one would accord a directing role to the Party it is that of inspiring and being a partner, and not that of political organizer. For, to intervene, with the best intentions in the world, in matters of art with the

¹² Ibid., Warsaw, 1956, p. 32.

¹³ The pretension of politicians which consists in wanting to advise and guide artists dates from very far back. Diogenes Laertius tells us in his *Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum* that Solon had already reproached the first Greek tragic author, Thespis, of having distorted the historical truth and, therefore, harmed society. Plato, we know, had banned poets from his ideal "republic" in the name of a sovereign ideal because they were capable of distracting citizens from serious matters, inciting them to superficial sensual pleasures. The Church fathers defended artists against the temptation of Satan in the name of ecclesiastical and laic powers.

authority of a regular tribunal or court of appeals, is to harm

artistic growth.

The Party leadership has the right and the duty to discuss problems with artists, but this discussion must have the character of a freely-argued polemic conducted among equals. If a work of art seems harmful let another artist or critic, party member or not, speak up and justify the criticism. Let the accused have the possibility of defending himself. Let truth be revealed in public discussion. Judged in this way, a work of art submits its worth to proof in the face of society. If, on the contrary, it is the leadership of the Party-eminent men but specialists in matters quite different than art—who must decide whether "X" is socialist realist or not, then the situation becomes serious. It is easy to make random judgments and thus create havoc. Even if a connoisseur is to be found in the group of politicians, everything is not settled. Once a mistake is made, art pays for it in time and money, utterly. Today, it seems to me, everybody agrees that a group of party leaders does not represent the esthetic aspirations of an entire people.

If one interprets party leadership in matters of art as it had been interpreted up to now, one inevitably arrives at the doctrine of the priority of the educational function of the artwork. This is a risky doctrine in terms of esthetics because these rigid norms make it possible to excuse all kinds of inadequacies in a work just so long as it keeps pace with an ideological point

of view.

History demonstrates that the least durable and most circumscribed esthetic systems are those depending on the priority of the pedagogical function of a work of art. The moralism of Rouskinovski's concepts has been as dubiously confirmed as Wilde's estheticism.

The educative influence of a work derives from its other didactic and esthetic values sensu strictu. The artists has his way of discovering the world, of giving it proportion, form, color; he judges, stimulates and obliges us to think and re-think about certain aspects of things, whether it be by recalling them to us or by making us discover them; he charms us by his language and composition. Therein lies the essence of the moral function of art. This function can only come from creative freedom. The

artists must be aware of this freedom, feel it *instinctively* and cling to it. Creative work will be devoted to the cause of the Party if it knows how to represent the truth of life in beautiful forms, and not if it follows party directives step by step. If socialism is the most humanistic regime, it is because it creates the most tangible and favorable conditions for such a state of things. To shape the masses they must have not only communicative art but also—and who knows whether one should not say, especially—difficult art.

The theory of socialist realism in my opinion does not imply at all that the teaching role of the art work takes priority over its other functions and that the party authorities have the last word with regard to art-criticism. For, the artist and the public play an equal part in the great process of evolution and have no need of any mediators for that. The artist's work is the expression itself of that evolution, and insofar as it is so, educates

both artist and public.

The theory of socialism must undergo still more research. I don't know if I have succeeded in this article in the operation which I projected: to decorticate the theory of socialist realism from the Zhdanovian envelope which ended by choking it. Let us hope that Soviet savants, who are in the best position to know the source materials, will write a history of art capable of proving that the essential elements of this theory have remained undamaged.

The theory of socialist realism must be an open theory; I mean by that, it must be ready to enter into polemics with other contemporary theories with regard to problems which have here been set forward; and it must stand comparison with new artistic phenomena. This comparison must rest on the principle of nonaggression. That is to say, it will no more be a question of affirming, per fas et nefas, that every work of value is socialist realist or that every socialist realist work is an artistic phenomenon of high value.

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